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THE INCARNATION OF GOD

LECTURES ON THE INCARNATION OF GOD

BY

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PREFACE

THE following are lectures on the Incarnation, which have been delivered to the Oxford Mission Sisterhood of the Epiphany, at Barisal, E. Bengal, during the last few years.[1] They were not intended for anyone else, and the responsibility for their publication rests entirely with the Sisters. They have asked again and again that they might be published, for they say they have sent notes of them to various relations and friends, with the result that they are confident they will help many people who will not read more formal treatises of theology. In answer to my constant protests that they were not meant for publication; that it would be necessary to change their form radically—in fact, to rewrite them, if they were to be published, and that I neither have the time nor feel any call to do that, they say, 'We do not want their form changed. It is just because they are informal and contain many repetitions and illustrations from ordinary life that we believe they will be read by and will help the kind of people we are thinking of; therefore we want you to publish them as they are, and see what happens.' At last my Superior, who cannot resist the Sisters any more than the rest of us can, said he thought their request ought to be complied with. That, of course, decided the matter. I have submitted the lectures to him, who, though he may not agree with all their statements, is satisfied that they do not contain anything which is contrary to the teaching of the Catholic Church. If it were afterwards found that they do, I should at once desire to withdraw it.

[1] The lecture on the Virgin-Birth is the only exception. It was not written for the Sisters, but was added afterwards, when it was decided that the lectures should be published.

They were intended to encourage the Sisters to constant study of the New Testament, and to help them to realize the presence and power and love of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who lived on earth, suffered, died, rose, ascended, and ever lives at God's right hand in our nature and for us all. If they become a means by which other people besides the Sisters are helped to know our Lord better and to live in a closer union with Him, it will be to me a cause of thankfulness as great as it was unexpected.

In this time of distress when our Lord is asking us all to help Him to renew the Church in her first love, and to recreate the world by making its kingdoms to become His kingdom, the one thing needful for us is to live in such intimate communion with Him that He may be able to do what He desires to do through each of us.

I am greatly indebted to Miss C. M. Rivington who has undertaken the labour of seeing the book through the press, and to Mr. H. Moody who has assisted her by correcting the proofs. Through this great kindness of theirs the risk of sending the proofs out to India has been avoided.

E. L. S.

BARISAL, E. BENGAL,
Feast of S. John the Baptist, 1917.

A LIST is given below of a few books which may be found useful by those who wish to read more about the doctrines dealt with in these lectures, but have not time for extensive theological study.

Du Bose, especially 'The Gospel in the Gospels' and 'High-Priesthood and Sacrifice' (Longmans).
Gore, especially 'The Incarnation' (Macmillan, 2*s.* 6*d.*), 'The Sermon on the Mount,' and 'Epistle to the Romans' (Murray, 6*d.*).
Illingworth, especially 'Christian Character,' and 'Divine Immanence' (Macmillan, 6*d.*).
Moberly, 'Atonement and Personality' (Murray, 6*s.*).
Temple, 'The Kingdom of God,' and 'Faith and Modern Thought' (Macmillan, 1*s.*).

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The Incarnation

I. Who became Incarnate?—In considering this central truth of the Christian religion, the first great question which arises is, 'Who became incarnate?' This question is answered in the words of the Nicene Creed as follows, 'the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, light of light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made . . . for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man.' This is to be considered as the Church's way of stating the truth that the most high God, revealed to the Jews as Jehovah, to us as the eternal Trinity, Himself willed to and therefore as soon as it was possible did become man.

Though it may be said, in agreement with the words of the Creed, that the Father and Spirit were not incarnate, yet this must not be understood as denying that God Himself in the fulness of His eternal being became incarnate. The simple statement of the truth 'God became man,' if it is to be in accord with the full Christian revelation of God's nature, has to be amplified, as, e.g., by S. John, 'The word that was in the beginning with God and was God, became flesh' (S. John i. 1, 2, 14); or in S. John iii. 16; or as in the Creed, 'The only-begotten Son of God was incarnate by the Holy Ghost.' But the amplified statements are exact equivalents of the simple one.

THE truth of the Incarnation should be considered along with and never apart from the doctrine of the Trinity.

It is true that historically the Incarnation came before the revelation of the doctrine of the Trinity. Through believing in Christ, the disciples came to think of three Persons as divine, without in any way losing their sense of the divine unity. It seems that they did not much reflect on the intellectual difficulties involved in this. And afterwards it was through the definitions which the Church

was forced to make to guard the truth of the Incarnation that the doctrine of the Trinity was formulated. But now that it is formulated, we must take it as the basis from which to consider the truth of the Incarnation.

The importance of having a true, clear answer in our minds to the question 'Who became incarnate?' cannot be overestimated. There has been much loss to individual Christians and to the Church through the lack of this. Christian theology has often gone widely astray and has presented to the world false and most deceptive ideas of God, especially with regard to the doctrine of the Atonement, for want of a clear grasp of the true answer to this question. And most of us have had lower ideas of God's love than we might have had from the same cause.

The truth about the Incarnation of God is taught to us in terms of Christian, not merely Jewish, theology, i.e. in accordance with God's fuller revelation of Himself as a trinity of persons. But this fuller revelation of the Trinity is itself based on and is an amplification of the revelation of His unity which preceded it. Through many centuries He revealed Himself as one God to His people, and it was not till this revelation had become firmly fixed in His Church (then the Jewish) that He proceeded to reveal the kind of unity His is. The new and fuller revelation is a fulfilment and in no sense a contradiction of the old.

Therefore we must not begin to consider the doctrine of the Incarnation without reminding ourselves of what God has told us of His oneness, and that the doctrine of the Trinity is to assist our minds to get some grasp of it, so that we Christians may have a fuller and clearer (not less clear) idea than the Jews could have of what is meant by the truth 'God is one.'

Through our own experience we can think of different kinds of unities, one higher than the other; e.g. we can think of a musical chord as being a unity of a higher kind than that of a single note; of the human body as being a higher unity than that of any one of its parts; the unity of the married life as a higher kind than that of each of the

parties separately. From such thoughts we can perhaps rise to the conception of the unity which I should be, if I were two persons instead of one, each of the persons being myself; so that, as the two lives of a husband and wife flowing each into the other make in some sense one life, so my two lives or consciousnesses flowing into each other would make a vital oneness of a more complete kind still, which would be my oneness—I being still I.

Now God has revealed to us that 'as each human individual being has one personality, He the divine being has three, and that each divine person is to be received as the one God as entirely and absolutely as He would be held to be if we had never heard of the other two, and that He is not in any respect less than the one and only God, because they are each the same one God also.'[1] Thus whereas the Jews were only taught that God is one numerically—that there is no other God but He—He has revealed to Christians in addition to this what the nature of His unity is—that He is three Persons in one God: in other words, that He is not one as a separate person is, but that His is the oneness of a nature which is essentially love. His life is not a stagnant one, but eternally flowing—an eternal act of giving, pouring forth of personal love, so that all the unions between persons, which we know or can imagine to be effected by the flow of love between them, have their root in and are but very faint shadows of the perfect unity—oneness—that God the eternal Trinity is.

Hence our Lord's teaching on the interrelation of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is all equivalent to a warning to us against the use of negatives, as that the Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Spirit, the Father and Spirit did not become incarnate. There is indeed truth in all these statements, but it is almost impossible to make them without over-asserting the negative and introducing ideas which are contrary to the truth. Christ says, e.g., 'I and my Father are one,' 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father': this asserts, as strongly as words could do so, veritable oneness and at the same time the

[1] Newman, *Arians*, App., note iv., p. 447, 3rd ed.

truth of the mutual relation of the Father and Son in God, which is the basis of that highest oneness of the Spirit of love which God desires to reveal to us.

This explains the fact we have stated, that the simple truth ' God became man ' is amplified for Christians. It is through this very amplification that our minds can arrive at a clearer understanding of God's nature, and are prevented from being content with the old Jewish idea of His mere numerical unity. We who know and can reflect on the nature of love, are capable of understanding, at least to some extent, what the perfect oneness of love is.

If we examine the language of the New Testament and the Creed, we can see that it does not mean that one part of God came down and was incarnate, while two parts did not. (That in one form or another is the distortion of the truth which has done so much harm, and on account of which we have probably all had very inadequate conceptions of what the Incarnation of God was.) But it means that God, the perfect love, the eternal Trinity, became man for love of man. The whole being of God was concerned for man. God did not send anyone or anything for Himself, but came Himself to save man.

Now consider the amplified statements of the truth in relation to the simple statement which is their equivalent, ' God became man.' Let us take a parallel case. In the Old Testament it is written, ' God said, let us make man in our image.' (This is not a beginning of the doctrine of the Trinity, but merely the honorific ' us ' which is equivalent to ' me,' a ' plural of majesty ' such as kings use on earth. God said, ' let me make man in my image.') The New Testament equivalent is ' all things were made by the Word.' [1] For God known, thought of, expressed to Himself is His Word. Hence ' God says, I will act ' is equivalent to ' the Father sends his Son to act ' : and, since He is love and it is through love that He does everything, ' the Father sends his Son by his Spirit to act.' So in this case, ' God became man ' is equivalent to ' the Father sent his Son to become man,' or ' the only-begotten Son was incarnate

[1] S. John i. 1–3.

by the Holy Ghost,' or 'God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son' (for man).

What do the amplified statements add? Let us examine some of them. S. John iii. 16. That says far more than 'God so loved the world that he came to save it.' I heard once of an old woman, who grasped its meaning with an insight which many learned commentators have not had. She said, when this passage had been read to her, 'Ah, that was love indeed! I can think of myself as going to save someone, but I can't imagine how I could give my only son to die for him.' It tells us that God, as we say, sacrificed all that was dear to Him, all that He has and is, for our sake. (Cf. Rom. viii. 32.) 'He who spared not his own Son but delivered him up for us all.' For the Father's whole capacity for love, if we may so speak, is satisfied in His Son, or Word, who is God's own self expressed. Hence when God gives Him for us, His whole infinite love is in action for us—He has given all, He could not give more, for there is no more to give. This act of giving is the Father's supreme act of *self-sacrifice*. This teaching appeals directly to experience of which we have all had abundance lately. We have all known, either through our own or others' agony, what kind of love is in exercise when parents willingly surrender sons in whom their lives are bound up, for their country or for God's cause. When, therefore, we are told that God gave His only-begotten Son to suffer and die for the salvation of us sinners, our hearts and minds tell us that He has given to us the greatest manifestation of love that could possibly be. We understand what S. John meant when he said, 'herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.'

Again, the truth regarded from its other side is expressed in such passages as S. John iv. 34; vi. 38; xvii. 4; S. Matt. xii. 50; or Heb. ix. 14. They tell us that Christ so loved the Father and all whom the Father loves that He offered Himself wholly for the salvation of men. His meat was to do His Father's will, which is that all men may be saved, and to sacrifice Himself to the uttermost

that it might be fulfilled. We may remind ourselves here of that which we shall consider at length later on, that the love of the Son which was manifested for our salvation is the love which made Him willing to endure self-emptying even to its extreme limit—the loss of all consciousness of union with the Father Who is His life. Thus the love which is the cause of the Incarnation and all that follows it, is the perfect love of Father for Son, and Son for Father, whose love the Spirit is.

We can see how much is taught by the amplified statements of the Christian Creed which we have been considering when we are faced with such a maxim as that of the Scholastics, that God is His own end—does all for His own sake. Without them this could only mean to us that God lives for Himself, whereas the doctrine of the Trinity teaches what is to us the exact opposite, that God lives wholly to give Himself away, and that love is His end : for love's sake He does all. The whole of His *self-sacrificing* love is the cause of the Incarnation and all the work which God does for each individual, which follows from the Incarnation. For God Himself, the perfect love, for man's sake was incarnate. See how the same truth is expressed in S. John's first epistle.[1] The wholly self-sacrificing love of God *is* eternally, he says. God is it by nature, apart from all creatures, and it 'was manifested in our case, in that God hath sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.' That means that God did what He did for love, i.e. for love of us, which when we existed He must have had, because He is in Himself love. What God is in Himself He is to us. As in His own nature He eternally gives Himself wholly, so also He gives Himself wholly for us.

God did not, as has so often been supposed, require the sacrifice of Christ to make Him look with favour upon man. He loves man with all His love, and therefore came Himself to save and raise him.

We can, therefore, look up and realize that in God is an infinite longing to sacrifice Himself wholly for us all ; that that can never change, because God cannot ; nothing that

[1] 1 S. John iv. 8, 9, 10.

we do or leave undone can make any difference to God's love for us. He loves us and has become incarnate—lives in our nature, because He is love.

God has shown to us through Christ the component parts, if we may use such an expression, of His love, which is His nature. Having considered them separately, we must go back again to consider that His love—seen as love of Father for Son and Son for Father ; seen in its essence as an eternal act of mutual self-giving—is the love of one being only. It is a perfect mutuality of love ; i.e. in Himself God is perfect love. The love of the Father for the Son is His Spirit ; the love of the Son for the Father is His Spirit. He has, or is, therefore, one Spirit, one life. As the sun's light is one, though we can break it up into parts and look at each, so God tells us He is one love, though we can, as it were, gaze at distinctions within the one. We have to get our minds trained to consider God, as He is revealed through Christ, as one, and any illustrations which help to train it for this are serviceable, though each must be in itself very inadequate.

For example, to some an illustration is afforded by their consciousness of possessing a subliminal mind, which sees something like another self, which can be sent here or there to do certain works : yet when a man sends it he is really sending himself. I can say, ' I will send my subliminal mind to someone,' which is another way of saying, ' I myself will go to him.' Now suppose that, instead of being thus conscious of possessing this subliminal mind, I were in the same way conscious of my whole being. Then this my consciousness would cause me to say, ' I will send myself,' rather than ' I will go.' I should then have some faint understanding of the truth that ' the Father sends the Son ' is only another way of expressing the truth that God goes Himself. And if my whole life were love, as God's is, then it would be by my spirit or my love that I sent myself, and by my spirit or my love that I, the sent one, would go. I should, therefore, be a trinity in myself, having a threefold consciousness. But *I* should be only one *I*. There would not be two or three of me, but only one.

Or again, if we see a man in a mirror, and not otherwise, it is the man we see and no one else. There is a difference between him and his image, but it is his image. And Christ is 'the image of the invisible God,'[1] 'the effulgence of his glory and the very image (or "impress") of his substance,'[2] so that he who sees Christ actually in fact sees the Father. There is the Father and there is His image, but the two are not two beings but one. Christ is the expression of God's essence, i.e. God Himself and no other expressed.

By such illustrations we can train our minds to grasp the truth of Christ's words, 'I and my Father are one,' and can prevent ourselves from thinking of them as two beings, as we do naturally when we do not check ourselves. Christ's divine nature and human nature are two things, but Christ and His Father are one thing (ἕν) only. To see Christ is, therefore, to see no other being than God, living indeed in our nature, our human life, but *God* doing that. Perhaps the best way by which we can habitually think of God is that the three persons of the Trinity are One Love, or one being in the eternal act of loving, one being whose whole life consists in loving. Thus the whole being of God became man. There is nothing of God that did not become man. The supreme, perfect Love became incarnate for love of man.

Let us now look at the same truth from a different standpoint.

The Unity of the Trinity further considered as a Unity of the Spirit or in the Spirit.—God is one love, or one act of loving. The Father and the Son are one, because they have one Spirit, not two Spirits. The Spirit is the love of the Father for the Son and of the Son for the Father. The two loves are one love. It is therefore of the oneness of one love that we are to think, not of the oneness of one person. There is great necessity for remembering this, in view of the ideas put into our minds as children and since, that the love of the Father and of the Son are different kinds of love. When we were children, many of us, though

[1] Col. i. 15. [2] Heb. i. 3.

we might not have denied in words that the Father was loving, yet felt that His love was not of a kind which attracted us, whereas the love of the Son Who died for us was. Compare also the effect of much of the language of theology and of hymns, which seems to imply that the Son Who loved us at once had to persuade the Father to do so, or that we have to persuade Him to do so by pleading the fact that His Son does.

It is possible for us to go a long way towards realizing the oneness of God's Spirit through our own experience. For, as our Lord says, we Christians can be united together in one by the one Spirit, as the Father and the Son are[1]—a truth which we should never have dared to dream of, if He had not taught it. This unity of Christians is a vital one.[2]

Consider our experience of the uniting power of the Spirit of God within us. We are all conscious of various forms of selfishness, to which we are prone. These tend to separate us from one another, as we feel, and to make each of us go merely his own way. But we are also conscious of an opposite force working within, which is always impelling us to go out into union with others. It is always at work, and, however many different kinds of union with different kinds of people it urges us to, we know that it is always the same force: we unhesitatingly call it the force of love. We know also that this same force is at work in all our fellow-Christians all over the world. So far as we allow ourselves to be guided and impelled by it, we are always being brought into union with more people. We can realize that, if all the Christians on earth were to allow themselves to be guided wholly by it, the whole Church on earth would be one body in love: there would be very many members each doing his separate work, but all having one spirit, one love, with divers manifestations. This carries us on a long way towards the realization that the divine love itself is one. We love in many different ways, and our love is united with much selfishness. But when

[1] S. John xvii. 21; cf. xiv. 10, 11, 20.
[2] See Rom. xii. 5; Eph. iv. 4.

we get to the essence of what our love is, apart from our selfishness, we see that it is one thing in us all—one mighty force, and yet not a mere force. The love of the Church is a large union of individuals loving, or filled with, the one Spirit. Examine in this connection Eph. iii. 14–19: 'Ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong . . . to know the love of Christ,' i.e. to apprehend the dimensions (so to speak) of the sphere in which the divine counsel finds its fulfilment, and then to know the love which occupies it, that each may be filled 'into,' i.e. contributing to, 'all the fullness of God.' This is the perfect consummation of finite being, which answers to the divine idea. But when this consummation is reached, then, as we can realize, each individual will be filled with and will live by the same one love. The whole will be one, because they all possess one Spirit.

It is a step onward from this to the teaching of S. John, as in 1 S. John iv. 7, 10, 16, 19. All this love of which we can think *is of God*; our love is the light kindled by the love of God. It is not in us another kind of love, but the one only love which exists, used by us in our finite and imperfect manner. Further, 'God is love.' He is this force which we have experienced, urging us to communicate ourselves, to keep nothing back for ourselves, for He is the Being whose life is the unlimited self-communication of Father to Son and of Son to Father.

In the light of S. John's teaching, consider how far our own experience of love enables us to reach up. The highest love (*ἀγάπη*) as we know it among ourselves is the self-communication of one person to another under the influence of the Spirit of God. And we know that such self-communication can produce such a close union between two or more persons that they can almost be said to live one life. Far more wonderful still are the results which many holy people have experienced even on earth, of the communication of Christ's life to them. S. Paul at times seemed not to know whose life he was living—his own or Christ's. 'To me to live is Christ,' he said. 'I live, and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth

in me.' Many other holy people have had similar experiences, in which we all have probably shared at times in some degree. We can rise in thought from such experiences to the kind of union the Spirit of Christ is producing always in the perfected saints in heaven. We can imagine at least that the lives of Christ and His saints are so completely one life that whatever they do or think, Christ can be said to do or think in them; that, though each of them remains a separate person, they are all one with Christ because they are filled with His Spirit—one in purpose, life and love. Yet they are all creatures and He is the eternal, uncreated God. Hence, glorious as the communion of the saints with Christ in heaven is to contemplate, such contemplation leads us only, so to speak, to the edge of the abyss of God's own oneness. But it does lead us there, and to adore and wonder. If such wonderful union can be produced by the Spirit of God in creatures, what must be the oneness of God Himself—the oneness of the Spirit of the Father and the Son—the oneness of the three divine persons in the one substance. We can only say that God must be the most perfect oneness conceivable; not, that is, a stagnant oneness such as that of one person separated from all others, or one note of music; but oneness which is the eternal harmony or mutual self-communication that makes the divine persons absolutely one. We can but fall back on the words of the Creed, 'Such as the Father is, such is the Son; and such is the Holy Ghost . . . the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God . . . and in this Trinity none is afore, or after other; none is greater or less than another; but the whole three persons are co-eternal together: and co-equal.' God Himself is what each of the three persons is: God Himself does what each of the three persons does. God is one eternal perfect love.

Hence the answer of the Christian Creed to the question 'Who became incarnate?' is that *the one eternal God Himself became incarnate.* The Father sent the Son, that is, God sent or came Himself, to be the saviour of the world. God

has sacrificed Himself to the uttermost for us. The whole love that God is, was and is given to all of us and to each, that we all at last may become partakers of the life of God. God Himself has become man, and lives for ever in our nature—a human life.

But how are we to express or even think of the difference caused to the human race by the coming of God to live in it as its head? To say that a new force had come, and that the Incarnation meant a new departure in the history of man, is to use language which is so inadequate as to be irreverent. The Incarnation could mean for man nothing less than that he was to be recreated: that the purpose of his original creation, and the possibilities hitherto latent in his nature—in body, mind, and spirit—were for the first time to be discovered and developed. It is evident also that we can form no conception of what man can become when God lives in his nature, from any experience of man when he is living apart from God. We shall return to this subject again when we think of the ascended Christ. But let us note here at the outset that the 'miracles' recorded in the New Testament about Christ's life on earth, from His Virgin-Birth to His Ascension, are but natural results of the great fact which is ever causing us new astonishment, that God has become man. Since this is so, nothing is too wonderful to be expected, either in Christ's own human life or in that of His members throughout the history of His Church. It is reasonable to suppose that we are only now beginning to realize what man can become through the power of Christ; what those works greater than His own are which Christ said His disciples would be able to accomplish after His Ascension.[1] It is true that, when wonders are said to have happened in man's history, the evidence for each is to be examined much more carefully than that for ordinary events. But the only reasonable attitude for those who believe in the Incarnation of God is one of expectancy that great things will happen in and through men, and especially that wonderful changes will happen in men's characters; that men in fact, will become more and more

[1] S. John xiv. 12.

like God. Indeed the main cause for wonder is, not that miracles happen, but that our race does not progress more rapidly towards perfection. But we have to bear in mind that man's history before the Incarnation goes back for so many thousands of years that we are not able to imagine how old the race is, and that through all those long ages man became more and more steeped in sin and every kind of selfishness. It is as though God had only just come to live in our nature and recreate the race. The two thousand years since the Incarnation are only as two days in the life of the race. Nor is it merely that God is creating a new race. He is making the old one new. And therefore the race has to fight against and conquer the awful tendency to sin which was accumulated through countless centuries of selfishness, before it can make God's life its own—that is, before it can by God's power live a life of love. Hence, while it is reasonable and right to expect great wonders to happen in individual lives and even in races, we must not be surprised if the progress of the whole race towards its ultimate perfection appears to our minds a slow one. If we could gain a view of the whole, instead of the small part we see now, it would no doubt appear to us to be extremely rapid.

II. How did God become Incarnate?—This is the question which comes next in order before our minds. The Nicene Creed answers it thus: '. . . Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God . . . God of God . . . very God of very God . . . was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man.' The Apostles' Creed says, 'Jesus Christ . . . was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.'

This means that the Holy Ghost, i.e. God's love, or God loving, and not the act of a man, was the active cause of God's birth into our nature; and that Mary became the mother of Jesus Christ, or 'the bearer of God,' by consenting to co-operate with the divine love, not with the act of a man, and therefore became a mother while she remained a virgin.

The main authority for this is the passages of Scripture, S. Matt. i. 18–25, S. Luke i. 26–38; the universal Christian tradition; and the fact that it harmonizes completely with the Christian truth of the Incarnation.

The truth that Christ was begotten of the Holy Ghost and born of a virgin has come down to us through the Christian ages as an integral part of the Christian faith. So far as we know, it was not seriously denied by those who believed in the Incarnation of God till our own age. But now many professed believers are anxious that it should no longer be taught as a *necessary* part of the Christian Creed. They say, 'Why burden Christianity with such a strange miracle, the evidence for which is not very strong? We ought not to put any unnecessary strain on men's faith, and the fact that they are required to accept this as an integral part of the Creed is undoubtedly preventing many from believing in Christ and His religion, who otherwise would be able to do so.' We ought to be able to understand how earnestly some Christian teachers are saying this, when they see men apparently driven from belief in Christ, because they are told that belief in Him necessarily involves belief in this 'miracle.' For it is of course true that the one great necessity for men is belief in the person Jesus Christ, and that belief that He was born in any particular way is comparatively unnecessary. Therefore it would be both futile and wrong to insist on belief in His Virgin-Birth as a necessary step towards belief in Christ Himself. We know well in India that many people attain to belief in Christ, which is so strong that they are willing to trust themselves entirely to Him and be outcasted from all their own people for His sake, who have not thought about how He was born. They can and do know Him as their ever-present friend and Saviour long before they understand that He was 'conceived by the Holy Ghost.' The Apostles themselves probably believed in His divinity before they knew the secret of His birth. Nevertheless, for those who do believe in Christ, i.e. in God Who became incarnate and manifested Himself in a human life, this truth about His conception and birth is a very necessary and illuminating one. It is most probable that through the denials of it or the doubts about it, which are now so frequent, the Church will come to realize its meaning and value more than ever, and will see that it is an integral and very precious part of the great heritage of the faith that

has come down through the ages, which must therefore on no account be surrendered, however careful her teachers are to teach it in its right order and according to the proportion of the faith.

The main scriptural evidence for it is contained in the two passages quoted, S. Matt. i. 18–25 and S. Luke i. 26–38; and many attempts have been made to prove that this evidence is untrustworthy.[1] The whole question has been debated very fully. The general result is that the evidence for the authenticity of these passages is seen to be quite satisfactory, and that they would be held sufficient to establish the truth of the Virgin-Birth of Christ, if men did not desire on other grounds than external evidence to

[1] The main objections to it are:

(1) That S. Luke's narrative, especially because of its accounts of angelic appearances and the statements in ii. 1, 2, is not a trustworthy, historical document. But these and such-like objections have had the effect of establishing S. Luke's reputation as a most careful and accurate historical writer, who was quite justified in beginning his Gospel with the preface, i. 1–4.

(2) That S. Mark, S. John, and S. Paul say nothing about Christ's miraculous birth. But then they do not give any account of His birth at all. S. Matthew and S. Luke are the only ones who do. Moreover, S. John i. 1–14 and Rom. v. 12–21 are quite sufficient to show that S. John and S. Paul believed in His supernatural birth. No doubt the story was kept secret till after Pentecost. And then it is quite natural and likely that our Lady should have told the story to S. Luke, and that S. Matthew got his story from a record left behind by S. Joseph.

(3) The genealogies speak of Joseph as father of Jesus. This is, however, not the case. They only speak of him as the putative father of Jesus; they are very careful not to speak of him as His real father (see S. Matt. i. 16; S. Luke iii. 23). For the purposes of a Jewish genealogy this was sufficient; e.g. S. Matt. xxii. 24. Further, the genealogies occur in the same Gospels as the accounts of the Virgin Birth. Evidently, then, the evangelists did not see any discrepancy between the two. Cf. Loisy, 'The evangelists evidently thought that Joseph had transmitted to Jesus the Davidic right, because he stood to Jesus in the position of a father.' He was legally his father.

(4) It is said that miraculous birth has often been ascribed to heroes in legends, and that this narrative is just such a legend. But no unprejudiced person, who read these Gospel narratives and then compared them with the legendary accounts of the birth of heroes, could possibly think that they were on a level. The Apocryphal Gospels, with their silly stories, indeed are; but there is as much difference between them and these Gospel narratives as there is between strict, sober history and fairy tales invented to amuse children.

disprove it. (The details of the debate can be found, e.g. in Gore's 'Dissertations,' chap. i., on our Lord's Virgin-Birth.) Most of the adverse critics would be willing to admit this. But they say the alleged fact is of so extraordinary a nature that much more evidence is required for it than would be required if it were an ordinary fact, such as, e.g. Christ's circumcision, presentation in the Temple, or flight into Egypt, which men find it quite easy to accept on the testimony of the same two evangelists.

Now all this points to the supposition that many who call themselves Christians, both divines and laymen, have never really grasped and assimilated the truth that *God* became incarnate—that He Who was born of Mary is no other than the one eternal God. This, it cannot be too often repeated, is the one tremendous 'miracle' which makes the supreme demand on our faith, but which is the essence of the gospel. If we do not believe this, we do not know what the gospel of Christ is, nor what is possible for us men. But if we do believe it and realize that we do, then the truth of the Virgin-Birth scarcely appears as a 'miracle' at all. Though we could not have imagined beforehand how God would or could become incarnate, yet, when our minds are directed, as they are by the evangelists and the Creed, to the way in which the great miracle happened, it seems not only a natural and fitting way, but it becomes exceedingly difficult for us, if not impossible, to think that He could have become man otherwise. And therefore we ought to be as willing to accept these statements of the Creed, with the evidence on which they rest, as we are to accept the statement that Christ 'suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried.' There is no reason for requiring more external evidence for the Virgin-Birth than we have. It does not create a new and unnecessary difficulty. On the contrary, the truth of it, as recorded by S. Matthew and S. Luke, tends strongly to solve rather than to create difficulties.

For let us now, starting from the belief that God Himself and no other became man, face the other alternative. We have in that case to put before our minds this question :

Can we imagine that God Himself could have been born of Mary through the mere will and act of a man, consented to by her; or, in other words, can we imagine that anything more could have happened through the generative acts of Joseph and Mary than the birth of a human person? Nothing else has ever happened in the whole course of the world's history from the generative acts of men and women. We are now considering the birth of God into human nature, a thing which has never happened before or since. Some say that they can believe that God was born by that means, but surely the difficulty of doing so is unspeakably greater than the difficulty of accepting the statements of the evangelists on the subject. Hence it is most probable that those who desire to get rid of the truth of the Virgin-Birth of Christ do not really believe, or do not realize that they believe, that God Himself was born of Mary. It is far more probable that their *minds* have not risen above the Nestorian idea that a human person was born, and that God afterwards united him to Himself and worked through him for the salvation of the world. There is a good deal of ground for saying this. It is not an uncommon experience for a preacher, who has been expounding the truth of the Incarnation, to be met afterwards by people who say, 'I had never thought before that that was the Christian faith; is it really as tremendous as that?' We have also to bear in mind that the theories of the Atonement, which prevailed for many ages in the Christian Church, were really based on the idea that Christ is not one with but different from the Father, that the attitude of the Son towards man was different from that of the Father, Who had to be induced by the Son to change His attitude. This implies, though men did not realize it, that the Father and the Son are either two Gods, or two different beings, one God and the other not God. But the men who formed the theories were professed believers in the Christian faith that there is one God and that Christ is God, while their theories contradicted this belief. Which shows how common it is for men to think they hold the Christian faith, though they have never realized what the Incarnation—its central fact—

means. Hence it appears not unlikely that the men in our days, who desire to get rid of the Virgin-Birth as a hindrance to belief, have never grasped the truth that God became and is man, the truth of which the Virgin-Birth is such a natural and fitting corollary.

The fact is that the Incarnation is so tremendous a manifestation of love that we selfish, unloving sinners, have the greatest difficulty in making the truth our own. It is so overwhelming to us that we are naturally and constantly tending to substitute something less than it, which we can more easily embrace. Hence the great importance of placing the truths of the Creed before our minds again and again, that we may gradually gain a clearer knowledge of what is involved in them. For as a rule when this is done, the facts themselves are seen to be the surest evidence of their own truth. Consider how it is so in this case. 'Our Lord Jesus Christ . . . God of God . . . very God of very God . . . was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man.' The angelic message, as reported by S. Luke, is: 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; wherefore also that which is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God.' The Holy Ghost is the love of God in act, as we have seen: He is God loving. He and no other, the Creed and the scripture say, was the active cause of God's birth into our nature. The will or Spirit or love of God, not the will of man, caused God to be born. This harmonizes with, and appears indeed as a part of, the whole manifestation of the love of God, Who 'so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son' for man's salvation. Mary consented to co-operate with the creative act of the Spirit or love of God, the 'giver of life,' and God became Man. We are fain to ask, when this is told us, 'How else indeed could this wonder have happened?' Can we at all imagine that this same result could have been attained, if Mary had merely consented to the will and act of her husband? So far from requiring more evidence than there is for this truth, it ought to appeal at once both to our minds and hearts as certainly from God, as altogether beyond man's

power to invent, and of a piece with the whole revelation of God's infinite love for man.

But we have far more reason still for considering this truth of inestimable value, though it is difficult to explain the matter in a fitting way. The acts by which children are produced were no doubt intended by God to be acts of pure love, i.e. of self-giving, springing from the desire to *give* not to gain self-satisfaction, the man giving himself to the woman and the woman giving herself to the man, and both giving themselves to do God's will. Both the man and the woman would then have co-operated with and would have been one in will with the Spirit of God, the Life-giver. They would have rejoiced to do this, no doubt, as loving people rejoice to give themselves to God and to those on earth who need them. If this had been, then the children which were born would have been unspotted products of pure love, and would have inherited the desire to do God's will instead of their own. But the fall of man, which was no doubt the result of the refusal to use these life-giving powers according to God's will and the determination to use them merely for self-gratification, frustrated God's purpose to such an appalling extent that the children of men have ever since been born in sin, i.e. inheriting a very strong tendency to do their own will instead of God's, with the result that almost the entire race of man, when Christ came, was far gone in utter selfishness and moral corruption.

But God came to recreate the race of man, to enable men to live a life of love—God's own life, in fact, instead of a life of selfishness. To do this He came to be the new head of our race—a second Adam. And it is certainly in accordance with this that the acts by which He was born were acts of love only, without any admixture of selfishness or the desire for self-gratification. 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee'; i.e. as the Son is eternally begotten of the Father by His Spirit or love, so the humanity of God is produced by the same Holy Spirit, Who is the eternal divine desire to give. And Mary's act was to consent to do His will—that only—to give herself for this: 'Behold

the slave of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word.' Hence our Lord's humanity was spotless. The new head of our race is the product of self-giving love only. God is love ; by love alone He became man, by love He won and enables us all to win man's victory. Let this be thought on carefully, and it is safe to prophesy that the result will be a resolve to hold fast to this story of the evangelists, deep thankfulness to God for it, and the realization that nothing less is so worthy of God or so necessary for man's salvation as that Christ our Saviour should have been ' conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.'

But here it is often objected that, if Christ were born without the natural inclination to sin that we all have, He could not have had our struggle, could not therefore have won our victory, and could not be a perfect example to us. Further thought, however, especially if it is based on our own experience, shows the fallacy of this. One Who came to conquer all man's sin and temptation *must* Himself be spotless. For no one who is at all sinful can feel the whole force of temptation. We never feel it, because sin has weakened us so much that we should fall long before the full force of temptation had touched us. Our power to resist temptation depends on our holiness, the force of love which we have received from Christ and have assimilated. A very sinful man falls at the first onset of temptation ; a less sinful one can resist more. The people who can now resist the most are the holiest of all. In all the Christian history, the men and women who have had and have resisted the fiercest temptation are the saints. The history of their struggle and agony is appalling to weaker and more sinful people like ourselves. It is plain, therefore, that only one who is perfect, sinless man can feel and resist the whole force of temptation that can be brought against man. The history of our Lord in the Gospels shows that He went through struggles and agony in striving to do His Father's will, with which no one else's struggles and agony can at all compare. This was because He was from the first full of strength, not weakened in any degree by being born in a sinful condition, and therefore able to

bear the whole burden of mankind. The truth, then, which is guarded and handed down to us by the story of His Virgin-Birth is the very truth which assures us that He actually knows by experience not only what is the force of our temptations to us, but also the whole force of all temptation that can be brought against human nature, which He has resisted to the uttermost.

This is the beginning of that wonderful gospel for man, which we are to consider. Nor must we think that, because He was always sinless, His example is of less value to us. The example we need is that of human nature in its perfection; we need to see human nature fully developed and exercised by the divine love in all its parts, that we may know what God's purpose and ideal for human nature, and therefore for us, is. This we see in Christ, and moreover this perfect human life is the life which He imparts to us that we may make it our own, and through it rise gradually to our perfection. This is the meaning and force to us of Christ's example. We are apt, however, to talk as if we needed an example of quite another kind. Men say Christ can only be an example to us, if He was born in sin as we are, and gradually fought His way out of it, so that He actually did no sins at all. But if we reflect on this, it is obvious that such an example would only drive us to despair. If one only of all the sons of men, who was born in all respects as we are, sin not excepted, had become sinless, his example would have almost no effect on us. We should be obliged to say, The example of that one man out of all the millions does not give me any ground for encouragement or hope that I can be like him, the one great exception. But, as it is, Christ puts Himself before us as the great champion of our race, the new perfect, sinless head, from Whom it is receiving life which is gradually recreating it, from Whom we too are receiving and can receive life which shall at last enable us to be like Him. This is the kind of example, of Saviour, we need. Having Him, we can be full of hope that what we sinners could not ourselves do, through Him Who is recreating us we can do more and more, until at last we do it perfectly.

Thus the Virgin-Birth of Christ is that which assures us that He is the champion—the second Adam, Whom we and our whole race need to the uttermost; since He has from the first been able to feel the whole force of human temptation, which no one born in sin can feel, has resisted it to the uttermost, and is able therefore to impart to us the life which has conquered *all* that held the race back from perfect union with God.

III. What the Incarnation involved for God.—It was, then, the eternal God Himself, Who willed to become man for our sake; and therefore, 'when the fulness of the time came' (Gal. iv. 4), the Father sent forth His Son, and 'the Word became flesh' (S. John i. 14).

We are to consider next what the Incarnation involved for God, before we go on to consider what it means to humanity.

Since the Word is God Himself, the eternal expression of all that God is, His Incarnation could not have involved even a temporary abandonment of any of His divine powers. For He could not in any sense cease to be, or become for a time, less than perfect God, and God is one and His whole being is eternally 'in act.'

It might have seemed that it could not have been necessary to state this for those who firmly believe that Christ is God. But it has often been supposed by Christian theologians of our own day, whose orthodoxy cannot be questioned (not to speak of others), that Christ, at the Incarnation and in order that He might live a truly human life, 'abandoned' some of His divine attributes. A distinction has sometimes been made between God's 'moral' and 'physical' attributes, and it has been said that, though He could not abandon the former, He did abandon—cease to exercise—the latter, meaning His omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence, the attributes that are evident to us only in the outward activities of God, 'within the sphere of the Incarnation.' This appears, in effect, to abandon the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, so far as it teaches that Christ is all that the Father is: that He is God manifested and expressed. But observe that this teaching, which seems so much to err, is leading towards

a fuller grasp of the truth of the Incarnation. It marks an attempt to state a true advance in apprehension of the truth, and such attempts generally involve language which has to be corrected later on when it is balanced by other considerations.

All such teaching has been occasioned by the difficulty of conceiving how Christ could live a truly human life and grow in wisdom or in stature, if He were at the same time living in the perfect exercise of all His divine powers. The language of such teachers amounts to this, that ' within the sphere of the Incarnation ' He was something less than God. For we must bear in mind what is involved in the truth that God is one, eternal, unchangeable. His life is one eternal act of love, as we have considered. His other attributes, as we call them, are but different aspects of His love. Thus His omnipresence is His love seen in one aspect: He is everywhere, because His love has no limit and must embrace all that is. Thus, also, His omniscience is the knowledge of perfect love. To say that ' within the sphere of the Incarnation ' He abandoned the exercise of His omniscience, is to say that He loved less than God does, which is the exact opposite of what the Incarnation according to the New Testament teaches us ; or it is to say that the Son, because of His incarnate life, loves less than the Father does. It is, of course, true that He did not know or love as God does, with His human faculties, for they are of finite capacity. The truth which we have to hold to, whether we see how it is to be reconciled with another or not, is that Christ is God and therefore His divine nature cannot change: that whatever He does or gives up for us, He is while He does it what He eternally is, the perfect Love whose whole being is ' in act.'

He became incarnate—lived and will live for ever a human life. Let us fortify our minds at this stage by an illustration, which, though it is of course inadequate, helps us to some extent. Suppose a king's son to choose the life of a poor working man, so as to be able to sympathize with and help such men. He would have given up his royal state, and would only know the sufferings and privations

of the life he had chosen ; but he would still be completely himself, the king's son ; he would still possess all the powers, knowledge, and accomplishments that he had before, though in his chosen life he could not benefit by them except so far as they could be used in such a life.

But the New Testament teaches that He for our sake was 'begotten of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, and became man,' i.e. truly took our nature and made it His own for ever. See S. Matt. i. 18–24 ; S. Luke i. 26–38. With these the following passages should be considered :

S. Luke ii. 40. (Cf. i. 80.) *πληρούμενον*, present part., 'being filled' day by day. *Σοφίᾳ*, wisdom in the highest and fullest sense. The intellectual, moral and spiritual growth of the child, like the physical, was *real*.

S. Luke ii. 52. (Cf. 1 Sam. ii. 26, from which it is perhaps a quotation.)

This states clearly that there was in Him a growth in 'wisdom' corresponding with the growth in stature. He knew what it was to learn through experience. (See Heb. v. 8.)

καὶ χάριτι. He 'advanced' in favour with God, as in wisdom and stature ; i.e. there was in Him moral and spiritual growth.

See also Heb. ii. 9–18 ; iv. 15 ; v. 1–10 ; ix. 11–15, 23–28 ; x. 4–14.

Concerning the manner of the Incarnation, or how the two natures, the Godhead and the Manhood, are joined together in Christ, there has been much diversity of opinion in the Church, through which can be traced a gradual advance in the apprehension of the truth which the New Testament teaches. Towards this advance each age may be expected to contribute something, and ours is making a very distinct and valuable contribution of its own. But the Church long ago marked the lines of this advance by the dogmatic decrees of the Councils on the subject of the person of Jesus Christ. These decrees were not intended as sources of fresh information, but were to guard and to define the Christian faith, and to indicate the paths along which the thoughts of the future must travel towards a fuller understanding of the truths taught in the New Testament. The decrees were :

(i) That Christ is perfect God of one substance with the Father ;

(ii.) That He is ' perfect man of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting ' (Ath. Creed);

(iii.) That the Incarnation does not mean that the Son of God united Himself with a human person, but that He Himself became human ; so that God Himself was truly born of Mary, though it was only in respect of His manhood that she was His mother;

(iv.) That the union of the two natures in Christ does not involve loss or change of nature to either, but that each exists in Him whole and perfect. So that He Who is of one substance with the Father in respect of His Godhead, is also of one substance with us, and that for ever. And as the divine nature was not limited by its union with the human, so the human was not absorbed or transmuted out of its own character by its union with the divine.

The New Testament teaches that Christ is perfect Man as clearly as it teaches that He Who became man is perfect God. This is the side of the truth that the Church of our age is chiefly engaged upon. The Church of the four Councils was engaged chiefly in proclaiming Christ's true Godhead: that He was ' of one substance ' not merely ' of like substance ' with the Father. The Fathers of the Church of those days were so eager to rebut anything which even seemed to deny this, that they tended to minimize the truth of His humanity. The teaching which has prevailed and taken root most deeply in the Church on this subject hitherto, is expressed most clearly in its full logical development by S. Thomas Aquinas. It amounts to this : that our Lord did not so much live a truly human life, as we do, as that He, living a divine life, used His human nature as an instrument of redemption. His human weaknesses, as recorded in Scripture, were due to acts of divine will restraining divine action, rather than to the weakness of His flesh. His manhood had no activity at all that was not due to an act of His will restraining His divine powers. Thus His humanity was not really like ours. His human soul from the first moment of its existence beheld the Beatific Vision. Hence, from the first, the knowledge of all things was infused into Him. He said He did not know the time of the Day of Judgment, meaning that He could not reveal

it. He did not learn anything from anyone : He asked the doctors questions, not to learn but to teach them. Though S. Thomas says there is a sense in which His human soul increased in knowledge, yet it was not necessary that it should do so in order to gain knowledge, for in another way His human soul knew all things that can possibly be known by a human soul in Paradise. Before His Passion he was *comprehensor* as well as *viator*. The whole picture is of Christ not really living a human life, but living a divine life and using human faculties for the doing of certain works : to atone for sin, set us an example, etc. And everything in the Manhood that seems incompatible with the exercise of divine power in the incarnate being has to be explained away.

This teaching insists on the divinity of the person who is the subject of the manhood, and upon his possession of his divine nature in its entirety and without abatement of its powers. Its excellence lies in this. But it proceeds to remove his humanity from the human sphere, on logical grounds, because it cannot otherwise account for the union of the two natures in him.

Contrast with this the picture of Christ given in the New Testament. There He is put before us as leading a human life like ours in all respects, except that He never sinned. He came to know man's experience, to fight man's battle, and win His victory as man ; to bear our sins and infirmities Himself : and in leading our human life and in bearing the evil that was in the human race He rendered a perfect human obedience, so that He could be the propitiation for our sins. It is because of His true human life that He is the High Priest, who presents us to the Father and obtains for us what we all need for salvation. It is certain that the Gospel story, and the commentaries on it in the Epistles, especially in the Epistle to the Hebrews, would never have received such an interpretation as the Fathers and Scholastics gave them in this respect, unless these men had felt compelled to that interpretation by logical necessity. It is just here that the best teaching of our age desires to part company with them. We are

determined to be quite true to the facts as given in the Gospels, and to the interpretation put on them in the rest of the New Testament, at all costs. This, we feel, is the first thing. When we have been true to these, it will be time to see how they are to be reconciled with the truth of our Lord's divinity. But yet it is impossible for our minds to hold both sides of the truth without trying to reconcile them. And we ought to try to understand what God has done and does for us, as far as we can. Hence we ought to consider the manner of the Incarnation, using all the help we can gain from the Bible, the Church, and our own experience, in order that we may be able to hold both sides conjointly without losing hold of the entirety of either. Let us, therefore, proceed to consider what we can discover as to the manner of the Incarnation.

Such a gradual 'advance,' as ages pass, is to be expected.[1] The Spirit's work 'is to teach by bringing home to men the whole of Christ's teaching. The revelation of Christ in His person and work was absolute and complete, but without the gradual illumination of the Spirit it is partly unintelligible, and partly unobserved.' 'The purpose of the mission of the Spirit is to reveal Christ, to make clear to the consciousness of the Church the full significance of the Incarnation . . . and so, little by little, through the long life of the Church the meaning of the primitive confession "Jesus is Lord" is made more fully known.'[2] 'The Spirit of truth . . . leads men "into all the truth," into the complete understanding of and sympathy with that absolute truth which is Christ Himself. . . . The message of Christ, given in His historical human life, was in itself complete at once. The interpretation of that message by the Spirit goes forward to the end of time.' 'He "glorifies" the Son, i.e. makes him known in his full majesty by gradual revelation, taking now this fragment and now that from the whole sum of truth, for the manifestation of the truth is indeed the glorification of Christ.'[3]

[1] See, e.g., S. John xiv. 26; xv. 26; xvi. 13 ff.
[2] Bishop Westcott on S. John xiv. 26.
[3] *Ibid.* on S. John xvi. 13, 14.

Hence we need not be afraid of saying that fresh discoveries as to the meaning of the Incarnation are being made in our age, which the Fathers of the early ages did not know. The new teaching of our age marks a distinct advance. For anything which enables us to understand Christ's self-sacrifice—self-emptying—better, that is to say, anything which enables us to realize more fully the truth of His really human life, is indeed a glorifying of Christ, as it is also a source of added encouragement to us. We ought to rejoice greatly and not be surprised that the Spirit, always at work in the Church, is leading her now to these new discoveries. But in pursuing the new thought which opens out, we must be careful to co-operate with the Spirit, and not merely to go our own way. It is, therefore, of great importance that we should bear in mind what the Church has learnt as to the methods by which the Spirit leads her gradually 'into all the truth,' and convenient that we should consider the matter now at some length.

Just as there have been theories of how the Spirit inspired the writers of the Scriptures, so have there been diverse theories as to how He inspires the Church. There is the theory that somewhere in the Church there is an infallible voice, which, if it could be got at, could pronounce at any time an infallible decision on any disputed point, so that the members of the Church would be saved all further trouble about it. One form of it is the Roman theory that the Pope is this voice; another is the Gallican, that the infallible voice is in the Church diffusive: that what the whole Church on earth agrees on may be considered infallibly true. But the difficulty always is to say what is meant by the whole Church, i.e. how large a majority of Christians. '*Semper, ubique, et ab omnibus*' always requires a more or less arbitrary interpretation. Dr. Pusey's theory was similar to the Gallican. He said that decisions made by the undivided Church were infallibly true: those, therefore, of the four great Councils were such; but that since the Church was divided the gift of infallibility has been dormant. But we must remember

that the doctrines defined by these Councils were not received in those days on account of any authority which the Councils or their members had. Men knew the disgraceful history of the Councils, the shameful intrigues, the appalling party spirit and hatred. The Church made its way gradually to a general acceptance of the definitions, because it was seen that they could be proved by Scripture and represented what all parts of the Church had believed since the Apostles' time.[1]

According to Dr. Pusey's theory, the gift of infallibility, dormant in the divided Church, would be revived if the Church (i.e. the Roman, Greek, and Anglican branches) could unite. But this leaves entirely out of account the vast mass of Christians all over the world, who do not own allegiance to any one of those 'branches,' though they are by baptism members of 'the Church.' It is far easier to believe that such a gift of infallibility was never given, than that it was given on such conditions that the exercise of it has proved for a thousand years to be practically impossible. Such theories of how God has inspired the Church have been invented by people who suppose that we cannot be certain of anything unless it is guaranteed by an infallible authority. But the truth is that such a supposed authority could not give us anything higher than that kind of certainty which God thinks sufficient for our practical guidance in all the affairs of life. After all, each one has to decide for himself and get at the truth through his own exertions, for, even if there is an infallible voice, each of us has to decide where it is to be found and when it speaks, and any one of us may be mistaken in his decision.

Since Dr. Pusey's time much has been discovered as to God's way of inspiring the writers of the Scriptures, and this has caused his, and all such mechanical theories of the inspiration of the Church, to seem unlikely. God, we see now, takes men as they are and works through them to reveal His character and truth, and by this means He makes men partakers and revealers of both. Each generation of Churchmen, pursuing the truth under His

[1] Salmon, *Infallibility of the Church*, pp. 277 ff. and c. xvii.

direction, may be expected to attain a deeper insight and know more.

In place of the utterance of an infallible voice every now and then, consider what very strong evidence we have —what firm ground we have on which to base our belief in the great truths of the Incarnation. The four Councils proclaimed what the beliefs were, which had been held in all parts of the Catholic Church from the Apostolic days till then, i.e. during the period when the Church was nearest the fount of truth. Moreover, the doctrines defined in the Church can be seen by any of us to be capable of proof from Scripture, and to be in fact in accordance with the teaching of the Apostles, who received their instructions directly from Christ and His Spirit. Further, these doctrines have been held in all parts of the Church and by the vast majority of Christians, separated from each other in other respects though they are, ever since that time. Is not this sufficient ? Anyone would indeed be foolish if he pursued this truth in any other direction than in that laid down by the four Councils.

The desire to find an infallible voice in the Church no doubt springs from the desire in human beings generally to get things done for them as far as possible, which means in this case to have a short cut made for them to the truth, which will give them the maximum of certainty with the minimum of trouble. Hence the great fascination which the Roman Church has had for so many ; for it is supposed to be able to tell men exactly what to believe and what to think in all doubtful matters, which, as people say, saves a great deal of trouble and gives a delightful, restful sense of certainty : but it certainly does not tend towards progress in apprehension of the meaning of the New Testament teaching. It is very common to hear people say, 'I have never had any doubt about anything, which has to do with religion, since I joined the Roman Church.' May not this be because they have never seen the necessity of thinking about anything for themselves, but have been merely content to accept what priests tell them ?

Take a modern example of the effect of the utterance

of an 'infallible voice'—the late Pope's Encyclical about Modernism. In this were set forth some thirty or more propositions, which were not to be held by the faithful on pain of anathema. No reasoning was given. The whole were printed on one page and distributed. It was the Pope's order to the faithful that they must reject the new thoughts which were arising in men's minds, without examining them, or they would incur the risk at least of damnation. Now, it is easy to explain that the faithful have a right to this kind of 'guidance' from the Church. But it must be observed that anyone who submitted to such guidance *ex animo*, would be debarred from thinking about the new questions that arose in his day, and therefore, in all religious matters, from any real intellectual progress. This is the same 'guidance,' we may observe, which forbid Galileo to say that the earth moved, and forbid the faithful to think of such a thing, and which has lately declared against the higher criticism and has said, e.g., that the gloss on 1 S. John v. 8 ('the three heavenly witnesses') is part of Scripture, though all Biblical students of any note know that it is not so.

In opposition to this extreme form of teaching by authority, the Protestant revolt has gone much too far. 'The Free Churches,' as they call themselves, tend towards the position that each congregation of Christians has to learn the truth *de novo*, that its main guidance is not to be gained from the Church in general, but from that which the Spirit gives to individuals now. This loses sight of the fact that the Church is a body, growing as a whole in apprehension of the truth, each generation building up on what has been learnt in previous generations.

Between these two extreme positions is the one which seems to contain the truth, which each of them has exaggerated, one in one direction and the other in the opposite, and which seems to be more in accordance with God's usual dealings with man, so far as we know them, than either of the others. That is to say, that God has given quite sufficiently clear indications of the main lines along which the thought of the Church has to advance, and then He leaves the

Church teachers of each age free to advance along those lines, guided by the Holy Spirit, if they will seek for and accept the guidance; but receiving only such guidance as will stimulate them to think for themselves with all their powers, and find out what they can of the real meaning of all the new discoveries that are made in each age in the various departments of learning, and what bearing they have on Christian belief and practice. This will mean often that the old truths have to be stated or explained in new ways. This may involve many mistakes and exaggerated statements, while the Church in any age is adapting herself to the new terms, but will result in a gradual progress in apprehension of the truth, through much difficulty, and therefore not without much patience and trouble in each new age.

This seems to agree with the way in which God deals with man always. He guides him, if he will accept the guidance, so that he may be in the way of salvation and truth; but also He arranges things for him so that he is induced to put forth all his own powers of mind and spirit to gain more truth and life for himself. Therefore, He does not do for him what he can do for himself, even though men are constantly asking Him to do so. Let us see the bearing of these considerations on the subject before us. The following were the decrees of the four Councils.

I. Nicaea, A.D. 325. This Council decreed that Christ is God—very God of very God—'of one substance with the Father,' as against Arius, who said He was a kind of demi-god who was to be worshipped but yet was himself a creature. The Church had to assert what her belief and teaching had always been, in and since the Apostles' time, not to give any new information about Christ's nature. But it was convenient, if not an absolute necessity, to fix this by some formula, and after much debate ὁμοούσιον ('of one substance') was fixed on: this asserted that as He was really man, of one substance with us men, so He was really God, 'of one substance' with the Father.

II. Constantinople, A.D. 381. Some years afterwards, a certain Apollinarius, who had been pondering over the

fact that Christ was very God, began to think that He could not therefore be very man, for God is unalterable and the human mind and will is liable to sin, so he developed a theory that man being made up of body, animal soul and spirit, the eternal Word of God took the place of the human mind or spirit in Jesus and united itself to the animal soul and body, so that Christ was the Godhead manifesting Himself in the living body of man. Thus, though like man, He was not man; He had neither a human spirit nor human flesh, because man's flesh without a human spirit would be mere animal flesh. This Apollinarius recognized, but he said that Christ in a sense was eternally human, because man's nature pre-existed in the mind of God. In reply to all this, the Church asserted what the teaching of Scripture and the universal belief of the Church was: that Christ was really man, with a human will, a human mind, human consciousness, human sympathies: that He had all man's faculties, and is as truly Man as He is truly God.

III. Ephesus, 431. The question which next arose was how Christ could be both God and Man. If He is really man, it was said, He must have free-will and self-determination. He must, therefore, be a human person. But how then is He God? Nestorius made popular a theory propounded by Theodore of Mopsuestia, that God united Himself to a man, that he who was born of Mary was not God but a human child Jesus, Who was made Son of God at His baptism and at last one with God in glory. But the Church asserted that this was not at all the teaching of Scripture, nor the belief of the Church hitherto. If this were so, God had saved only that one man—there is no Gospel for man—God has not entered our nature at all. There were various explanations and evasions, so the Council had to ask Nestorius whether he would acknowledge that Mary is *θεοτόκος* (' bearer ' or ' Mother of God '). He would not do this, and the Council excommunicated him and decreed that God Himself was born of Mary, so that she can be called in respect of His manhood ' Mother of God.' He is therefore one person, not two.

IV. Chalcedon, 451. Later on there was a reaction

against Nestorianism, as Nestorianism had been a reaction against Apollinarianism. An abbot, Eutyches, said that Christ is indeed God Incarnate, but therefore the human nature must have been absorbed by the divine—transubstantiated into it—and so have lost its own proper and distinct nature. The Church decided, in opposition to this, that the humanity in Christ remains what it was. The divine person assumed human nature, lives in it, acts through it, without in any way changing its nature. The two natures subsist in Him, in the unity of the one person which He is, without confusion.

For the expression of the whole faith thus defined by the four Councils, see the Athanasian Creed, 'For the right Faith is, that we believe and confess: that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man; God, of the Substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds: and Man, of the Substance of his Mother, born in the world. Perfect God, and perfect Man: of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting. . . . Who although he be God and Man: yet he is not two, but one Christ. One; not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh: but by taking of the Manhood into God. One altogether; not by confusion of Substance: but by unity of Person.'

All this contains just the truth which S. John taught by 'The Word became flesh,' but that truth expressed more definitely in terms made possible by the growth of the Church in apprehension of the truth and made necessary by denials or misunderstandings of it. The truth thus defined gradually made its way until it was accepted and assimilated, as it has been ever since, by the whole of Christendom, with the exception of a few small isolated sects here and there.

It is, therefore, quite conceivable that something like what happened in the fourth and fifth centuries might happen in some future century, and that the Church might be in a position and consider it necessary to define further the same truth. But, if so, this would only mark a further advance along the same lines on which the Church has been going since Christ's time, in apprehension of the

content of the truth taught in the New Testament. It must be observed that this is as different as possible from the contention of some extreme modernists now, that Christianity is advancing in our day by liberating the Christian idea, which is the truth to live by, from the story that God actually in history became man and lived a human life on earth, which can be discarded, and that we can realize that Jesus was only a creature. This is to go back terribly instead of advancing. It is to disregard the tremendous force of the witness of the whole Church through all the past centuries.

The Incarnation involved supreme self-sacrifice on the part of God for us men and for our salvation. The Father is represented as making a real surrender of His Son (S. John iii. 16 ; Rom. viii. 32 ; 1 S. John iv. 9 f.), and the Son as making a supreme act of self-emptying (Phil. ii. 5–11) or ' self-beggary ' (2 Cor. viii. 9), in obedience to His Father's will.

The advance in apprehension of the manner of the Incarnation, which is being made in our own times, can be considered most conveniently in connection with the controversies as to the interpretation of Phil. ii. 5-11.

Notes.—The word ' gave,' in S. John iii. 16, brings out the idea of sacrifice, i.e. of love, shown by a most precious offering. The title ' only begotten ' is added to enhance this conception, and the exact form in which the title is introduced (*τὸν υἱὸν τὸν μονογενῆ*) further emphasizes it. ' His son, his only son.' There is an obvious reference to Gen. xxii. 2. (Westcott, *in loc.*)

Rom. viii. 32.—The argument is, that if God gave for us the most precious gift He could give—His own Son, how can He grudge us anything ! God has sacrificed Himself to the uttermost for us.

1 S. John iv. 9.—The same expression is used as in the Gospel above : *τὸν υἱὸν τὸν μονογενῆ*. The whole love which God is was manifested in our case, in that God gave all He had for our sake.

Phil. ii. 5-11 ; v. 6.—*ὑπάρχων*, imperf. part., points to indefinite continuance of being ; cf. its use elsewhere : S. Luke xxiii. 50 ; Acts ii. 30 ; 2 Cor. viii. 17 ; xii. 16. (Gifford, ' Incarnation,' pp. 8-21.)

μορφὴ θεοῦ (see Gifford, *ib.* pp. 22–36, and Lightfoot *in loc.*) *μορφὴ* is properly the nature or essence, not in the abstract, but as actually subsisting in the individual, and retained as long as the individual exists. Thus, in the passage before us, *μορφὴ θεοῦ* is the divine nature actually and inseparably subsisting in the person of Christ.

οὐχ ἁρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο. *ἁρπαγμὸν* can have an active or passive sense, can mean 'robbery,' 'usurpation,' or passively 'a prize or treasure to be held fast.' The latter alone gives a meaning which agrees with the context—that is to say, with the Apostle's purpose to set forth Christ as the supreme example of humility and self-renunciation. 'Though He was entitled to an equality of majesty with God, yet He did not consider this a treasure to be held fast, but gave it up.'

τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ—this was what He gave up. It evidently does not mean 'being in the form of God,' for why then the change of words? But it means 'that which was his because he was in the form of God.' (See Gifford, *ib.*, pp. 36–74.)

μορφὴν δούλου λαβών—shows how He emptied Himself. His state of glory was laid aside in the act of 'taking the form of a servant.' *μορφὴ* must have the same sense as in the former phrase. He became as truly a servant as He is permanently God. The next phrase explains the meaning of *μορφὴν δούλου λαβών.*

ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος, see Gifford, *ib.*, p. 84 f.: 'If you ask how Christ emptied himself, the apostle answers, "By taking the form of a servant." If you ask again how Christ took the form of a servant, the answer immediately follows, "Being made in the likeness of men," i.e. being made man, like unto us men, sin only excepted.' The expression 'likeness of men' does not indeed necessarily imply the reality of the nature which Christ assumed. That is declared in the words 'form of a servant.' S. Paul probably uses the phrase 'likeness of men,' because Christ, though perfect man (Rom. v. 15; 1 Cor. xv. 21; 1 Tim. ii. 5), yet was not *a man*. His humanity represented that which is by nature common to all men. Then the Apostle goes on to say, '*καὶ σχήματι*,'

> &c., that 'in the whole mode and fashion of his life, in every sensible proof whereby a man is recognized and known as man, Christ was so recognized and known and found as man.'

The truth which seems now to be emerging into greater clearness is, that Christ our Lord 'being originally and continuing to be in the form of God,' i.e. possessing permanently the whole nature and essence of deity—the fulness of the Godhead, 'counted it not as a prize or treasure to be held fast that he was on an equality with God'—that He had all the glories, the prerogatives of deity, the insignia of the divine majesty, 'but emptied himself thereof by taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men,' i.e. He divested Himself, not of His divine nature, which was impossible, but of the condition of glory and majesty which is His by right of that nature, and He did this by entering into man's nature and making it His own, so that He lived man's life with a human consciousness, as truly as though His human consciousness were the only consciousness He had.

Further, that the Gospels contain the record of His human mode of existence only, the thoughts which He is therein said to have expressed being as truly human as were the words and actions by which He expressed them. Thus the incarnate life of Christ, which is described in the New Testament, was not partly divine, partly human, sometimes manifesting divine power, sometimes merely human. But it was the altogether human life of the Divine Son of God.

Nor was it that Christ merely used His manhood as a medium of divine self-revelation and an instrument of redemption. His human nature does indeed reveal God, because Christ, by making it His own and living in it, caused it to receive and assimilate and therefore manifest the divine nature, so far as this is possible. But the revelation was made solely through human thoughts, words and actions. And the acts of His incarnate life were of redemptive value for human nature not because they were divine acts, but solely because they were the acts of the Son of Man.

Thus, Christ's gospel for man is the good news not only or chiefly of what God has done for humanity from above, but rather of what He has enabled and does enable humanity, and therefore those who share in it, to do and become, by living Himself a human life.

Whatever theory is formed as to the manner of the Incarnation, it must be based on a true interpretation of the language of Scripture. That language must not be twisted or explained so as to agree with a theory previously formed on other grounds. Very plain language is used to convey the teaching that the Incarnation involved a supreme sacrifice on the part of both Father and Son. The Father freely surrendered His only begotten Son for our sakes, and sent Him to do and suffer for us what is recorded. The Son, in obedience to His Father's will, 'emptied Himself' by His own voluntary act, an act corresponding with the precept of Phil. ii. 4. So far the teaching of Scripture is plain. But the answers to the question, 'Of what did He empty Himself?' have been many and diverse.

It must be noticed, however, that the chief difficulties which the truth of the Incarnation causes in people's minds, arise from their inability to believe that Almighty God could really have sacrificed Himself to the uttermost for such a race as ours—that God can really be as loving as the New Testament says He is. And no doubt this truth does make a supreme demand on our faith. But men are often so inconsistent as to say that man himself invented the story, though it is obviously the last kind of story that man would have invented of himself, while he *could* invent the kind of story men substitute for the true one; such stories, for example, as the extreme modernists of our days, successors of the Arians or Socinians of other days, have substituted for the true one.

The 'advance' has come about mainly through the careful study of our Lord's life, which has been and is being made in modern times. In no former ages has there been so much criticism of the text of the New Testament. And it has gradually been shown that the views of that life, which were accepted all through the middle ages and down to our own times, are not consistent with what the record actually says. This was disquieting at first. It seemed as though Biblical criticism was strengthening the forces of Socinians and Unitarians. Then orthodox writers,

striving to reconcile the new learning with the old dogmas, often used language—to express their 'kenotic' theories—which implied that our Lord, in order to live a truly human life, abandoned something of the Godhead, or language which resembled Nestorianism. This was not what they meant, but they had at first no language to express the new light which was breaking in upon them, or they saw the new light so dimly that they were not sure what it was. It is gradually becoming clearer through the scholarship and patient, prayerful work of Christian divines. And the new light is revealing to us more of the depths of the love of God for man—is showing more clearly how much He is willing to do for our sakes. The gospel of Christ is seen to be an even more glorious gospel than we imagined, though the new discoveries are, as is to be expected, making greater demands still on our faith, for we are now being called on to believe that God is far more loving than we thought He was.

We have to try to bring home to our minds what the Apostle means in Phil. ii. 5–11. Perhaps we can do it best by an illustration. Suppose, as before, a king's only son, remaining, of course, as he must, a royal son—he could not make himself cease to be this which he is by nature—were to divest himself of all his royal state, which was his by right, by disguising himself and living permanently as a working man under obedience to an employer of labour. His new consciousness—his way of looking at things—his life's experience would be that of a working man. He would be seen and known merely as such by his fellow men. He would be accorded none of the honour which was due to him as the king's son and heir, but only what he might gain by the good life he lived as a working man. And if he did this for the sake of his fellow men only—to know their life and help them to a better condition, he could be said to have 'emptied himself' completely for their sakes. We have thus to try to realize that our Lord emptied Himself of His royalty, though of course He remained in nature what He was, and lived the life of man under obedience, with the full consciousness of one,

just as though He were by nature only a man. We have to realize that He actually did this, however impossible we may find it to see how He could do it. He is Almighty God, and can therefore do what it is entirely beyond our power to account for or describe the method of. His Church, even on earth, can understand ever more clearly what He did and why He did it, but not so easily how. It is the same with His work of creation. We can see more and more of the wonders of the universe He has created; we can also understand more and more why He created it, but not yet *how*.

He became man so truly that in His incarnate life He had only a human consciousness. It was *His* consciousness, and therefore the content of it was far greater than that of our consciousness. What the content of it was we have to learn so far as we can from the New Testament, especially from the Gospels. But it must be noticed that, however wonderful and full and extensive it was in comparison with ours, it was nothing but a *human* consciousness. How He had this quite distinct from His divine consciousness, only God can fully know. But, as we have it on the authority of the whole Church from Christ's own time (see above) that He had two natures 'without distinction,' so now we are being led to realize that He therefore had two consciousnesses without distinction or confusion, one belonging to His divine and the other to His human life; not merely that He *had* them both, but that He has them for ever—'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever.'

Men have gradually been coming to see more clearly that the Gospels contain the record of a human life only. But those who go on from this to say that therefore it is the life of a man only, can do so only by arbitrarily rejecting large portions of the Gospels themselves, or rather by ignoring the divine eternity which runs all through them. The Evangelists state quite clearly whose human life they are recording. In the early ages of the Church it was supposed that some of the acts recorded were divine, e.g. turning water into wine, the transfiguration, raising the dead, &c., and some were merely human. This was ac-

counted for by supposing that our Lord at times restrained His divine power, so as to allow His human nature to act, as when He was weary and hungry, and sometimes exercised it fully. In other words, in His incarnate life He sometimes acted as God, sometimes as man. He, being one person only, acted sometimes through His divine, sometimes through His human nature.

Now, all this is very different from saying that Christ's incarnate life was a purely human one. Those Fathers who adopted this teaching did so because they desired to be true to the Gospel story. They took the two kinds of actions which seemed to be recorded; they named one kind divine and the other human; and said that the *ego* of the incarnate life of the Gospel was sometimes the divine Logos unlimited, sometimes the Logos limited. They were on the way to the fuller truth we can see now. They were not so true as they thought to the Gospel record. If they had regarded the self-limiting of the Logos as an act belonging to the sphere of His divine activities, as S. Paul seems to teach (see above), they would have seen perhaps what we can see now. And how much of 'the Gospel in the Gospels' they missed, by thinking that the most wonderful parts of our Lord's life were not parts of His human life at all!

Those Fathers saw, however, that there must be a permanent subject of Christ's manhood, and they said this was the unlimited Logos. Hence Christ's weariness, suffering, death were all due to acts of divine will rather than to the inherent weakness of the flesh. They taught that His sufferings therefore had unlimited ethical value as redemptive acts, because they were all due to acts of the divine will, which made it possible for Him to feel the sufferings. This means that Christ used His human nature as an instrument for doing certain redemptive acts, whose value consisted in the fact that they were divine acts. This sounds a good and complete theory till the new light we have is thrown on it. And then it is seen that they had an altogether inadequate view of the redemption which Christ has effected for human nature. They thought of

God as accepting a payment for human nature's debt, which was not paid by human nature at all. It was really almost as though God could be bribed to let human nature off the penalty it deserved. Whereas, as we shall see more fully later on, Christ redeemed human nature solely by making it good—making it pay the debt of perfect obedience to God's will, for which it had been created, and doing this in spite of all the sins of the race. The value of Christ's redemptive acts consists *solely* in the fact that they were human acts. Human nature was brought into union with God, because it was made to do His will perfectly. Christ's sufferings have no redemptive value merely as sufferings, which can never *per se* be pleasing to God, but were only of value because of the obedience which underlay them. It cost Christ His Passion and death to do humanly the will of God. And the fact that He did it perfectly with His human will—not the fact that He suffered in doing it—is what caused the at-one-ment between God and man.

This is Christ's gospel for man: not that Christ has done or offered something instead of man, which God has accepted in lieu of man's obedience and as a propitiation for man's sin; but that Christ has enabled and does enable man to offer himself a perfect sacrifice to God. The good news is that we can do God's will perfectly ourselves, because we are sharers in Christ's human nature; not that we have something to offer to God in place of our doing it.

We can now sum up the results of our consideration of what the Incarnation involved to God.

The truth, which is emerging into greater clearness in our days, is that God by becoming incarnate made our nature so truly His own that He lived and still lives a human life with a human consciousness; a life, that is, in which He can no more go beyond the limits of human capacity than we can, and in which His consciousness is as truly a human one as though He had no other.

In this great truth lies the supreme manifestation of God's love for man. For, if it seems at first a contradiction in terms, against which our reason rightly rebels, to say that the infinite

God can have in any real sense a limited life and consciousness, we must beware lest we are being deceived by the use of an unsuitable term. The term 'infinite' applied to God suggests a heathen idea of Him rather than the Christian truth. The properly Christian term is 'perfect.' God is the perfection of love.

Now, the supreme power of a loving being, as we know, is that of making himself one with those whom he loves. We can, therefore, at least dimly understand that to say God has taken to Himself a true human life and consciousness—has made Himself one with man in spite of man's sin—is another way of saying that God loves man to the uttermost. Hence, God being the perfection of love and man's need what it is, our reason should be driven to rebellion by the denial rather than by the affirmation of the full truth of God's Incarnation.[1]

N.B.—In emphasizing this side of the truth, we must be careful not to think of Christ's human consciousness as though it were that of a human person united to Him. It is the human consciousness of the divine Son of God. Christ is the Saviour of mankind, because He, God, entered into the conditions of manhood, and felt and feels what it is to live as man—feels Himself conditioned and limited by manhood, so that in His incarnate life He has only such consciousness of His divine being and power as His human soul is capable of.

As we try to sum up the fuller teaching about the Incarnation which is being discovered in our days, we see that it is not only shedding fresh light on the wonderful capacity of human nature, but is also enabling our minds to enter more deeply into the mystery of God's nature, which is His love.

Perhaps the main difficulty in the way of the fuller apprehension of New Testament teaching was the metaphysical conception of God as infinite. It was said, if God is infinite He cannot also have a finite life or limited consciousness. And therefore the very plain teaching of the New Testament that God 'was made like unto us in all things, sin only excepted,' or that 'the Word became flesh,' was to a large extent explained away for logical reasons. And the idea which has prevailed for centuries

[1] See 1 S. John iv. 8–10; S. John iii. 16, 17; Rom. v. 8.

in the Church was, as we have seen, that Christ's incarnate life was not a properly human life at all, but was rather a life of divine power and consciousness, which was interrupted at times, when He willed, in order that He might do the redemptive acts which were necessary to save mankind.

Much of this difficulty vanishes when it is remembered that the word 'infinite' is essentially heathen, and that, as has been said, 'the Western philosophers, Greek and Latin, never shook themselves quite free from the difficulties of materialism' (except indeed when they did so by giving up all interest in material reality, which is the position we are familiar with in India). When once we get free from the idea that God is of infinite extent, and substitute perfection for infinity, and when we combine the idea of perfection with the New Testament revelation that God is love, then we can think more truly of God as a being Whose love has no limit, Who has the perfection of being or of the power of loving. So that, whereas we can love a little because we are made in His image, He can and ever does love perfectly or to the uttermost. To think of God in such terms as 'Out beyond the shining of the farthest star, Thou art ever stretching infinitely far' is to make it almost impossible to think of Him as having a limited consciousness. It seems a kind of logical or mathematical absurdity. Again, it is often objected that God, being omniscient, could not possibly feel ignorance, that He Who knows everything could not be ignorant of anything. But the objection vanishes when it is remembered that God's omniscience is that of love. By love He can share the ignorance of men, or *know* what it is to be ignorant. In all such supposed difficulties, it is necessary to substitute the spiritual conception of God given in the New Testament for the materialistic one that the human mind necessarily inclines to. When once we are on this spiritual line of thought, we find ourselves at once in harmony with the language of the New Testament. Nothing has to be explained away; we have a key which fits all the New Testament doors. And we find that the Bible is consistent with itself. All the rest of it leads up to and is explained by the truth 'God is love.'

From this we can proceed towards the heart of the great 'mystery of godliness.' For we know a good deal through our own experience of what love can do and does. And the main thing we know about it is that it is the power by which a person can put himself in the place of another, so that he can truly enter into, and, to some extent at any rate, partake of the other's consciousness. Herein is the secret of the power of love. Unless we have sympathy with a person—'feel with' him—we cannot do much to help him. But love at its best, that is to say, in so far as it is purified from selfishness, gives the power of sympathy. We have all met people who have this power in a wonderful degree, we are conscious of possessing it ourselves in some degree. We know what it enables men to do. I can love a person so much that I can enter into his thoughts, feel as he feels about things—some things at any rate. That is, having my own thoughts about them, I can have his also and feel them as distinctly as though they were the only ones I had, I can have a double consciousness—my own and my friend's. And I know that, so far as I cultivate this power and pray for more of it to God, it increases. It seems that it might increase in me, if I could only get rid of my sinfulness, to almost any extent. I am, therefore, in a position to receive the revelation that God is the being Who has this power in its perfection, and Who has exercised it and is always now exercising it on behalf of men: that He so loved man as to become man Himself: that He has made Himself the head of our race, so that He might be in a position to know all human experiences, to feel all human sins as if He had done them, to know all human joy and sorrow as His own, to 'be tempted in all points like as we are,' to 'be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.' All this means that, whereas I sometimes have two distinct consciousnesses—my own and the friend's whom I love—because I can love a little, He, God, the perfection of love, can have and has two perfect consciousnesses, the divine and human, each perfect and distinct, so that He is man as truly as He is God.

What it is to have these two consciousnesses only God

can know, as He only can know what it cost Him to identify Himself perfectly with sinful man. But when this manifestation of His love is made to us, it is one which both our minds and hearts can receive. If we do receive it, it appeals to and evokes all that is best in us. So far from saying it is impossible, we see that it is worthy of God Who is perfect love, though we are not loving enough ourselves to have been able to imagine beforehand that God would do this, nor to understand how He did and does it; for this is an exercise of love which is far beyond our powers. Yet it is an exercise of the same love that we know about and use, the perfect doing of what we ourselves, through Christ, can do imperfectly. Thus it is a true and clear revelation to us of love, that is, of God. And the more we know by experience about loving, the more clear this revelation becomes.

But, for the receiving of the revelation of God's love given in Christ, it is necessary to have a clear grasp of the truth that the human consciousness shown in the Gospel story is that of Christ Himself and no one else. (We must beware of being deceived by the use of a word which may present different ideas to different minds. The word 'consciousness' may be of such a kind. It might, for example, be rightly said that Christ had only one consciousness, because He is only one person. I hope the illustrations that follow will make clear the sense in which the word is used here.) It is not that He joined to Himself the consciousness of a human person, that He might act through it, as a man might unite himself to a friend to act through him, or to a machine. But He, being and ever conscious of being God of God, sacrificed—'emptied'—Himself, so far as to know what it is to live as man—that is to say, what it is to have a limited life, with limited powers.

Almost any fact of His earthly life leads us into the heart of this mystery of love: e.g. He was weary and hungry at the well. He, Who is and is conscious of being God Almighty, knew what it was to have come to the end of His power, to have to sit down and rest, to be dependent upon food for power to go on; or—to go on with the same

story—He knew what it was to be reinvigorated again by the satisfaction which His soul felt at the thought of the future gathering in of men into His Father's kingdom, in accordance with His Father's will.[1] All this was His own experience, a real part of His consciousness at that time and therefore for ever. And it was just as real an experience as if He had been only man, though it was actually the human experience of the Son of God. The difficulty about His being and feeling ignorant of many things, which He would afterwards know, is the same, no greater and no less, than that of His being tired or hungry. 'He was tempted'—tried—'in all points like as we are.' 'He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.' We cannot fully understand how this could be, because our powers of loving and of understanding love are so small; but we can believe that it actually was so, because when we are told of it we can see that it is the perfect exercise of the love which we ourselves can exercise to some extent, e.g. when we so truly sympathize with someone that we feel his sorrows or joy as our own.[2]

The clearest and the most awful illustrations are afforded by our Lord's Passion. Take S. Luke xxii. 41–44, and S. Mark xv. 34. It is quite clear that the Evangelists here record the fact that our Lord suffered the extremity of human sorrow. He was conscious that He had come to the end of His power of endurance. He was suffering to the uttermost. We should feel that it was an entire contradiction of the truth of the Gospel story to say that our Lord did not really feel as much human grief as it was possible for Him to endure. He was conscious that He had sorrow which was unbearable. This was His own consciousness. And the Gospels give us no warrant at all for saying that He was conscious at the same time of a self that could not be, and in fact was not, the subject of suffering. It was He, the one person, who was suffering to the uttermost on account of our sins. It is not true in any sense to say that God, the Son of God, cannot and has not suffered. The sufferings were His own. He is not

[1] S. John iv. 6, 32–36. [2] Cf. p. 45 f.

two selves, one of whom is above the reach of suffering, while the other suffers. He is one person, the Son of God. He loved us so perfectly that He willed for our sakes to know what human suffering is to the uttermost. It is, therefore, for ever part of the consciousness of God Himself to know through His own experience what human hunger, weariness, ignorance, sorrow, and agony are. And if it is asked how can the omniscient one feel ignorant; the Almighty feel weak and tired; the omnipresent be in only one place at a time; the perfect one know suffering and death; the answer is that He can do all this, because He loves perfectly, without limit, because He is love and His knowledge and power are those of love. It is not that He has to give up any part of His divine nature in order to know man's experience. It is indeed His divine nature or love, exercised to the full, which enables Him to do it. S. Paul expresses it thus: 'Christ, being rich, for our sakes became poor,' and thus saying He enables us to see a little way into the mystery. For we know it is possible for a millionaire so to love and feel for the poor that he could live a life of poverty, and so know by experience what it is to be a poor man. Or again, a man, being rich in health and very vigorous in body, could by love so feel for and with a sick, suffering man, that he felt his sickness as if it were his own. This is to go in the same direction, by the same power of love, though not so far as God went when He truly made man's life His own and bore His sickness and griefs. A still better example is the mystical experience which very loving people have when they love sinners who have sinned deeply in ways in which it would be impossible for themselves to have sinned. It feels to them as though they *had* committed the sins of the others!—that is to say, their love gives them the power to have the sinners' consciousness. This leads us directly towards the realization of the truth that Christ—God Himself—was '*made sin*' for us, though He 'knew no sin.'[1]

[1] 2 Cor. v. 21. Cf. Rom. viii. 3; Gal. iii. 13; 1 S. Peter ii. 24; Heb. ix. 28; Isa. liii. 12.

The Atonement

What the Incarnation means for Humanity.—**Christ's incarnate life reveals the capacity and original destiny of human nature. It shows that man, made in God's image, was meant to have a life of habitual communion with God, and that human nature was to be the highest created instrument for doing God's will and manifesting His character. (See, e.g., Phil. ii. 7–11.)**

God's purpose in creating anything is best seen through the highest work which it is capable of doing. The incarnate life of Christ gives us a revelation of the highest capacity of human nature at each stage of human life. For, though other things may have higher uses than any we have seen hitherto, human nature could have no higher use than to be the instrument of God's own personal life.

We are accustomed to think of Christ's incarnate life as revealing the character—the love of God. And we are right, for that is its main purpose; but we do not sufficiently think of it as revealing, for our joy and encouragement, the wonderful capacity of human nature. In order that this revelation may come to us, we must bear in mind the truth handed down by the Church, that Christ is perfect man, just as He is perfect God. There has been through many ages, as we have seen, a tendency to think of His humanity as essentially different from ours, and of His incarnate life as semi-divine, semi-human. If this were true, then the Incarnation would bring us no revelation of the capacity of human nature. For, whenever Christ's power seemed to exceed what we considered the limit of human power, we should say it was not human but divine power which was being manifested. This has often been said by the Fathers in old times, and by their disciples in later ages. (For example, 'at Cana he appeared as God, at the well as man,' &c.)

But the truth on which we have been dwelling is that Christ's incarnate life was altogether a human life, so that every recorded act of His incarnate life is a fresh revelation of what human nature can do, when it is made the best use of. The revelation is made to us in detail only with respect to human life in this world. It teaches us what we are and what we can do in this life. What human nature can be and do amid the surroundings of the next life, and finally in heaven, we do not know yet, but we believe that we shall know hereafter, when we see Christ as He is.[1] For this life the revelation through Christ's incarnate life gives us encouragement in all the details of our life. For it assures us that, though we cannot do all that Christ did, we can always do God's will as He makes it known to us in detail. And that is all we need to know. His will is for each, and is made known to each, according to the present capacity of each.

Consider what wonderful inspirations God has given us, what great things He has often asked us to do! What glimpses we have had of the heavenly life He wishes us to live here and now! We fail to rise to His demands often, because they seem impossible for *us*. We should rise to far higher things, if we could realize habitually that we can do all that God asks of us. As it is, God often puts an ideal before us which we do not rise to because we think we cannot; and He has to be content with a lower kind of obedience from us. But this ought not to be, and need not be again. We need not fail God in anything that He asks us to do or to give. The doing His will may cost us very much, and we may only be able to do it after a long struggle, as was the case with Christ Himself, but we can do it because Christ did it.

This, however, brings us to the next section.

Christ enables humanity to fulfil its destiny, in spite of man's fall and all its dire consequences. (See, e.g., Rom. v. 6–21.)

In other words, God accomplishes the atonement of man, i.e. the bringing of the whole fallen human race to be in union or

[1] 1 S. John iii. 2.

'at one' with Himself, through and in His own incarnate life. See Acts iv. 10–12 ; 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6 ; S. John xiv. 6 ; S. Matt. i. 21 ; cf. S. John i. 29.

Notes.—Rom. v. 6–21. The description of Christ's work (vv. 6–11) brings out forcibly the contrast between Adam and Christ (vv. 12–21). Adam's fall had a far-reaching effect on mankind. It brought death to men during the whole pre-Mosaic period, though they had not sinned, as Adam had, against an express command. Christ's redeeming work has also a far-reaching effect. But how superior the work of Christ! Adam's fall brought sin ; the law increased it ; but the work of grace has cancelled, and far more than cancelled, the effect of sin. Sin produced death ; but Christ gives the life which conquers death and is itself eternal.

Acts iv. 10–12.—S. Peter points out the nearness of salvation. It is in and comes from Jesus of Nazareth, Whom they crucified, but God raised ; and all men can find their salvation in Him, their fellow man.

1 Tim. ii. 15.—The supreme God seemed very far away from sinful men till He became man, Christ Jesus. Now that He is one with men, He can make them one with God.

S. John xiv. 6.—'I,' says Christ, 'the man whom you know—your brother—am the way to God. I am your life.'

S. John i. 29.—S. John the Baptist says this of one Who was then walking towards them, Who was coming to be their human companion.

God's redeeming work for man in and through His incarnate life extends through the whole period, from the beginning of His life as an infant till 'the end' (τὸ τέλος) spoken of by S. Paul in 1 Cor. xv. 24.

But, that we may think clearly on the subject of the Atonement, it is best to consider this period as divided into two parts, (*a*) from the beginning of our Lord's human life to His death on the cross, (*b*) from His Resurrection to 'the end.'

In (*a*) the salvation of all men was made possible, which salvation is, however, only being accomplished by slow degrees during (*b*). Hence it can rightly be said both that Christ's work for man was 'finished' and the Atonement accomplished on the cross, and also that His work of bringing men to God only began at His Resurrection. We must always be careful to bear

in mind and teach that, apart from His Resurrection and all that follows it, Christ's atoning death would have been of no avail for man ; in other words, that Christ is our redeemer, not merely because He once died for us, but because He Who died lives now glorified in our nature, to impart to us what He won by His earthly life and death.

We need not speculate now as to what Christ's incarnate life might have done for man, if man had never fallen, interesting and inspiring as such speculation is. The wonder we have to consider is that, in spite of the sins of the race, Christ can and does enable man to be for ever what God originally meant him to be—a sharer with Himself in the life of Paradise.

This healing and recreating of man must ever remain a wonder to us. We can learn much about the laws of healing, physical and spiritual ; much about what our Lord did and does to heal man ; much about what we have to do to be saved ; but the actual process by which sinful men become holy remains to us a secret process—as secret as that by which life comes to be. The more we think of it, the more we are constrained to bow ourselves in adoration and gratitude before God, our Creator and Redeemer, and to wonder thankfully that such a being should want people such as we are to live with Him for ever, and should do so much to bring us to Himself. The wonder appears greater the more we consider what ravages sin has made in human nature. In India we can see far more than can be seen in a Christian country how much human nature is diseased.

Yet Christ became man to undertake and accomplish the whole cure—the healing and the recreating of the race. He became man to do far more than repair the ravages caused by sin, to pour into the race abundance of life—*the* life, that fallen men might become like God ! Rom. v. 12–21 may be said to sum up the teaching of the New Testament on this subject, and its watchword is ' where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly.'

Thus the Gospel of Christ raises our minds and hearts high above the thought of sin and all its awful consequences

to the all-abounding, all-victorious, all-embracing *life* of Christ. The thought of victory should fill the hearts of Christians. They are sent forth conquering and to conquer. What happened in those first days? The whole world lay in the evil one then, but the disciples of Christ went forth knowing—realizing that Christ's power was sufficient to overcome all evil. Hence the tremendous victories they won. Ours would be tremendous too, if we trusted to Christ's power as they did. The first disciples and all disciples in future ages were sent forth to be witnesses of the Resurrection—the actual victory of Christ, the prospective victory of men now over all evil, the ultimate victory of the whole race. Hence it is wrong for any Christian to be melancholy, or to regard chiefly the dark side of men. Christ's joy should fill our hearts even in the midst of the fiercest struggle against the sin of the world. We are to face sin and heathenism as something which Christ will at last conquer, which He is conquering now—which He would conquer much more rapidly if we would believe in Him more. It is all written in the New Testament, but so far we have only grasped a little of it. Further, Christ, the man Christ Jesus, is in us 'the hope of glory.' Salvation is brought thus near to us. It is in the *human* life of Christ, with which we are not only in spiritual but actually in physical contact.[1]

We have to consider how Christ's redeeming work was and is done (*a*) in the period between His birth and death, and (*b*) in the long period from His Resurrection till it is all accomplished.

It is important to see the distinction in the work of the two periods, and that the work of (*b*) follows from and is a result of what was done in (*a*). The failure to make this distinction has often caused men's minds to be fixed on the dead rather than the living Christ, and to suppose that our salvation is accomplished by something which was done long ago, with which we had nothing to do, and which has often been represented as a kind of legal transaction, on account of which God let off the criminals because He had received from Christ on the Cross something which pacified

[1] See references, pp. 50–1.

His anger. This has led to false and low views of what 'salvation' is, and in general to a very crude caricature of the Christian truth. In the early Church, in the sub-Apostolic age, when the teaching of Christ and His Apostles was very vividly before the minds of Christians, the faithful dwelt almost wholly on the living Christ Who was ever present with them, and of His union with them, which was their salvation. The Apostles were sent to be witnesses of His Resurrection, and their immediate successors dwelt on Him as risen, ascended, and present with them through His Spirit. But afterwards, when the New Testament teaching became less vivid, it was the dead Christ and the effects of His death which were chiefly dwelt on.

Consider, for instance, the difference in the way in which Christian truth was represented in the symbols and pictures of the early ages and in the latter ones. At first—up to the sixth century, at least—the minds of Christians were directed in their Churches up to the living Christ in glory, blessing and dispensing His gifts. Later on, the crucifix took the place of the picture of the glorified Christ, and the importance of the Resurrection, Ascension, and Session of Christ was to a large extent lost sight of. In this age, and especially in our own part of the Church, we are being led back to the teaching of the New Testament, and are enabled to gain much new light on it.

Now, it is, of course, true that the Atonement wrought by Christ is a fact, and is effective whether we understand it or not. Theories of the Atonement cannot make the Atonement in itself any more real. But this does not make it unnecessary for us to try to understand better what Christ has done for us. It is indeed impossible, and even if it were possible it would be wrong, for the Church not to examine into the meaning of the New Testament language on the subject. For, the better we understand the work of Christ, the more effectively shall we be able to co-operate with Him. He associates us with Himself in His redeeming work,[1] and therefore He must desire that we should try to understand it.

[1] E.g., S. John xvii. 22 f.; xx. 21; Acts i. 8, &c.

But the Church in each age interprets the New Testament language on the subject to a large extent in accordance with the ideas of justice, punishment, and love which prevail. These ideas become fuller and more adequate as time goes on, as the Spirit gradually leads us on into all the truth, and so it is not surprising that our age is shedding a great deal of fresh light on the meaning of the New Testament words, with the result that a view of Christ's atoning work is opening out before us, which makes the old theories appear very inadequate and even absurd, and which produces in Christian hearts something which can only be described as a mingling of wonder, joy, gratitude, and an ardent desire to make Christ better known in the world, and to do whatever we can do that He may see the results of His Passion.

Let us consider first what our Lord accomplished during the period of His incarnate life, which ended with His death on the cross. By 'becoming,' to use S. Paul's words, 'obedient unto death, even the death of the cross' (Phil. ii. 8), He effected for man what is described in the New Testament by three groups of words or images, which are summed up by the three words :

I. ἀπολύτρωσις, 'redemption' (recall from captivity through payment of a ransom).

II. καταλλαγή, 'reconciliation' (the making up of a foregoing enmity, or the causing an at-one-ment).

III. ἱλασμός, 'propitiation' (the gaining of one's goodwill by means of some propitiatory offering).

Hence it will be necessary to examine the teaching of the New Testament under these three heads.

But it will help us greatly towards the understanding of this teaching, if we first consider, and try to get a mental summary of, what was and is the condition of fallen man and his relation to God, apart from the incarnate life of Christ and its influence.

It is extremely difficult in a Christian country to realize man's appalling ignorance of God and his utter selfishness apart from Christ. For people are confronted with the fact that very many men who protest that they are unbelievers are nevertheless leading very good and self-sacrificing lives. It is often a great puzzle to Christians, that people who say they do not believe in Christ, or even in God, are often

so good. And it is commonly thought that S. Paul's or S. John's description of the world apart from Christ is a gross libel on man. But we must not overlook the fact that such men as we are thinking of are not apart from Christ and are not unbelievers. They are aiming at goodness and they believe in love and self-sacrifice, which is the same as saying that they really believe in Christ and are serving Him. They are among the people spoken of by our Lord in S. Matt. xxv. 31–40, of whom He says that they will be very much astonished at the last day to find that they have been living for and serving Him. They are not disbelievers in Christ, but in some caricature of Christianity which they have mistaken for Christianity and which they rightly reject. How clearly this is seen, for example, in such a biography as that of J. S. Mill!

Yet the war must have brought home to thousands who live in Christian countries what man is like without Christ. In spite of the sins which are done among Christians, the principles of Christ have become so interwoven with our life that we cannot easily imagine life without them. But now we have before us the appalling vision of a large nation which has as a nation rejected the principles of Christ and has elected to live by those of its pagan ancestors. And we have seen the result. We could not have imagined beforehand that a great nation could sink so low; that two great services like the German army and navy could possibly do, and glory in doing, the things they have done. Men say they have put themselves outside humanity. But that is not so. They have only put themselves outside humanity as we are now accustomed to it, that is, Christianized humanity, however far it may be from what Christ seeks to make it. And the horror which is created by the sight of Germany fallen enables men to get a truer idea than they had before of what man is apart from Christ—of what the whole world was like when He came into our nature, and when 'love one another' was 'a new commandment' to the world.

But we in India have always a better chance of realizing the truth about man apart from Christ. Consider the awful

ignorance of God in which men live, who are under the dominion of any of the great false religions.

Hinduism does not know what it believes about God, but the different ideas of Him which prevail among Hindus are almost always contradictory to the truth about Him. The best of them conceive the Supreme Being to be an impersonal It ; the worst that there are many gods, who are chiefly engaged in taking vengeance on those who injure or disregard them.

Mohammedanism teaches that the one God is a mighty, revengeful, hard despot, Who rejoices in the utter damnation of all who will not acknowledge Him.

Buddhism, if it does not actually teach that there is no God at all, teaches nothing about God, but that salvation means merely the escape from life into nothingness.

And all the smaller religions, of which we know, are little more than systems for the propitiation of and escape from revengeful demons. The religions of the Greeks and Romans had many noble elements, and there were many noble Greeks and Romans who were struggling bravely towards the light ; but the best of them confessed that they did not know God and must wait patiently till He revealed Himself, and the vast majority had notions of Him which were just as false as those of India.

Consider also that those who are not influenced by Christ are living almost entirely for themselves. We *know* this in India. And the ways in which men seek their own satisfaction are merely the results of the different kinds of temptation to which they are subject. They are simply at the mercy of their circumstances. We are told that it is precisely the same in other heathen countries. All the evidence at our disposal goes to show the correctness of S. Paul's awful description of the world apart from Christ.[1] The most that can be said is that there are here and there exceptional individuals, who try to make some stand against the surrounding evil. (We must not reckon those who are being influenced by Christ and His teaching. There are very many people, e.g. in India, *D.G.*, who, though not Christians,

[1] Rom. i. 18–32 ; iii. 9–18 ; cf. 1 S. John v. 19.

have had their whole view of life changed by Christ, and probably would become Christians if they had the courage to follow their consciences.) With the vast majority there is no stand made against evil. Everyone is for himself ; no one can trust another. Every year of life in India makes it more apparent that the world, so far as it is uninfluenced by the incarnate life of Christ, ' lies in the evil one.'

Now consider God's relation to fallen man, as such. While man changes, God does not. His love for man is what it always has been ; His purpose for man does not change, though the way in which He works for the fulfilment of it necessarily changes with man's changes. The love which God has always had, and must have, for man is manifested in Christ. God desires and works for man's highest good always. The harder man makes this work to be by his sins, the more will God bear. This consideration will help us out of a good many mistaken notions which have prevailed. God did not require anything to be done to induce Him to love man ; He could not love man more than He always does. God did not require a satisfaction or propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of men to appease His wrath, in any sense which is connected with our notion of desiring vengeance or satisfaction for injuries which are done to us. The whole revelation of God's character in Christ shows this, as well as such particular teaching as that of Christ in the parable of the unmerciful servant, or the prodigal son, in which God is represented as willing to forgive our whole debt freely, without seeking from us any ' satisfaction ' (in a human sense) in return.

On the other hand, God cannot make any terms with sin. His attitude to it must always be one of hatred and strenuous opposition. Nothing can induce Him to think less badly of it. An imputed righteousness which does not result in real righteousness can have no value for Him, for He would not be loving us perfectly if He could be satisfied while sin still remained in us. It is wholly impossible, and nothing can make it possible, for God to be at one —at peace, or in union—with sinners, except in so far as they are giving up their sins. God's mercy is not in conflict

with His justice, as is often supposed, so that if it were not for His justice He would have more mercy. His justice and mercy are merely different aspects of His love. God's justice means that because He is perfect love, therefore He is utterly opposed to sin always. His mercy means that He is always loving to sinners, wishing and striving for their highest good, in spite of all that they do against Him.

All this clears our minds from misconceptions, and enables us to see more clearly what was and is necessary if man is to be brought into union with God, and therefore helps us to understand the New Testament teaching about what Christ has actually done and is doing. We have summarized that teaching under three heads, but that does not mean that the groups of three ideas, summed up under those three leading words, are mutually exclusive. Each runs into the others, but each brings into prominence a particular aspect of the truth, and by considering them all in conjunction we may hope to get some fresh insight into the truth, which has so often been obscured by teaching which has dwelt too exclusively on one or other of them.

I. Christ effected a ' redemption ' (*ἀπολύτρωσις*), i.e. a release effected by the payment of a ransom. The chief passages in which this is taught in the New Testament are Rom. iii. 24 (cf. viii. 23 ; 1 Cor. i. 30 ; Eph. i. 7 (*διὰ τοῦ αἵματος*), 14 ; Col. i. 14 ; Heb. ix. 15 ; cf. S. Matt. xx. 28 ; S. Mark x. 45 (*λύτρον*) ; S. Luke i. 68 ; Heb. ix. 12 (*λύτρωσις*) ; Titus ii. 14 ; 1 S. Pet. i. 18, 19 (*λυτροῦν*) ; 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6 (*ἀντίλυτρον*) ; also 1 Cor. vi. 20 ; Gal. iii. 13 ; iv. 5 ; 2 S. Pet. ii. 1 ; Rev. v. 9 ; cf. Acts xx. 28 ; passages in which Christ is said to have ' bought ' us.

Connected with these are the passages which speak of sin as slavery and sinners as slaves : Rom. vi. 16–20 ; S. John viii. 34 ; Titus iii. 3 ; 2 S. Pet. ii. 19 ; and of deliverance from sin as freedom, or cessation of bondage : S. John viii. 36 ; Rom. viii. 21 ; Gal v. 1 ; Rev. i. 5 (R.V.).

The summary of the teaching of this group of passages is that Christ, when He became incarnate, found mankind in a condition of bondage to evil and the evil one, and paid a price, described as that of His own blood or life, which was sufficient to effect the deliverance of all men from their captivity and to translate them into the freedom of true sons of God.

How is this to be understood in view of what we considered above? (pp. 55–59). God required no inducement to deliver men; He longs always for the deliverance of them all (1 Tim. ii. 4; S. John iii. 16 f., &c.). The bondage from which men need deliverance is, as we know from the Bible, man's history and our own experience, the captivity of their wills, described in Rom. vii. No price paid for men by another can effect this deliverance, therefore, unless it gives them the power to will effectively what is good. How, then, does Christ's life deliver us?

The price He paid was all that it cost Him to live that life of perfect obedience to God in our nature, which culminated in His death on the cross.

What He effected by this was (*a*) the complete victory of His own human will over the whole power of sin and temptation (see Rom. viii. 3; cf. vi. 7–10), and the glorification of His human nature in heaven which resulted from it (Phil. ii. 7–11); (*b*) the potential deliverance of all men from the bondage of sin, because, by reason of His union with the whole human family, He, ever living His perfect human life in heaven, can so flow into the lives of all men as to enable them to win the same victory that He won (see Rom. viii. 1–4, 10 f, 14–18, 29–39; Gal. ii. 20; Heb. x. 10; 1 S. Peter iii. 18); hence He can be described as the second Adam, by whom the whole race can be made new. (Rom. v. 12–21, vi.; 1 Cor. xv. 45; cf. S. John i. 14, 16.)

The passages in the New Testament which express the idea of a deliverance effected by Christ by the payment of a ransom are to be studied along with the rest of the revelation recorded in the New Testament, and with all we know of God's character and way of dealing with men. We must beware of isolating them, and of interpreting them too strictly in accordance with ideas suggested by similar dealings of ours with our fellow men, forgetting that they are used metaphorically, that is to say, with a meaning which suits the spiritual, divine sphere concerning which they are used, and is therefore much higher than the meaning they ordinarily have for us. Take, for example, the meaning given of ἀπολύτρωσις ('redemption') in Grimm's lexicon: 'Everywhere in N.T. metaphorical, viz. deliverance effected through the death of Christ from the retributive wrath of a holy God, and the merited penalty of sin.' That idea

is derived from human experience, such as that of the deliverance from captivity of one who deserved it, because another had pacified the wrath of the inflicter of the punishment. This involves low, very earthly notions both of justice and deliverance. It might not be morally right to let such an one off: such deliverance might be a very bad thing for the sinner, or for society in general. If the redemption effected by Christ is defined thus, it is no wonder that people have called the doctrine of the Atonement an immoral one. Again, it is most misleading to speak of the 'retributive wrath' of God. That implies that He wants an equivalent in punishment for the sins of sinners. And theologians have often tried to show how the death of Christ was an equivalent in punishment for the sins of all men, so that God was contented because of the punishment Christ endured, and could let the sinners off! Till quite lately, theories of the Atonement were nearly always expounded in terms of a legal transaction, if not an illegal one! Such interpretations of the New Testament language would have been avoided, if it had been remembered that the metaphorical meaning of words is a higher and fuller one in the heavenly sphere than in the earthly; and that the words in question are to be considered along with the rest of the record of God's revelation of Himself.

The 'bondage' from which Christ delivers is real bondage, and by far the most awful kind of bondage. So, too, the redemption effected by Christ is a real deliverance, and the highest, most perfect kind of deliverance, effected by the payment of a real price, which was the highest and the most real that even God could pay. The meaning of the deliverance effected by Christ must be gathered from considerations of the kind of bondage from which man needed and needs deliverance. This will also clear our minds as to the justice and morality of the Atonement. It does not follow that it is just either to receive or give a ransom to effect the deliverance of another. Take the following instances.

If a man had through misfortune and no fault of his

own fallen into a debtors' prison in old days, and a friend came and paid his debt for him and so effected his deliverance, that would be good and just. But if the man in prison were a Mr. Micawber, it might not be good to pay his debts. The deliverance effected by Sydney Carton, in a 'Tale of Two Cities,' for his friend at the cost of his own life was glorious; even to read of it makes men better. But supposing some friend of S. Paul's had raised enough money to bribe Felix to let S. Paul free, that would have been an immoral transaction, and S. Paul could have been very much displeased by it. Or suppose angels had offered to bear the equivalent of the punishments God gave to the Israelites in the Old Testament, God could not have let the Israelites off on that account. If He had, He would not have been just, nor would He have been loving. He would have been like a weak, 'good-natured' parent, who cannot bear to punish his child when he needs punishment, or who overlooks his child's faults instead of doing all he can to help him to get rid of them.

Now, man's bondage is that of his will to sin, so that he is not free to carry out what he wills.[1] This bondage is truly the punishment—the result—of his sin: the more often he sins, the more his sinfulness increases, or the power of sin over him. He may indeed go on sinning for so long that at last he gets into such a condition that he does not even want to be delivered—that he cannot even repent. So long as he is in that state, no deliverance is possible for him; he is committing the sin which cannot be forgiven. Christ speaks of this awful possibility, that we may realize how terrible the bondage of sin is. So long as man's will is not strong enough to enable him to do what he knows is right, and what his best self desires to do, he is not yet delivered from his bondage. No transaction outside him can possibly deliver him, unless the effect of it comes inside him and gives his captive will the power to get free. Consider, for example, our own experience. God asks us for something very difficult. We want to give it; and, so long as we do not give it, we are in bondage: the freedom

[1] Rom. vii. 18–24.

of God's service is not ours. But if we could gain the power in our will to give it, we should be free; nothing else could free us.

Now we are to consider how Christ effects this deliverance for man; the price He paid to effect it, and why that is sufficient.

The Cost to Christ of our Redemption.—The Church bids us think specially of this every year in Lent and Passiontide. The main record of it in the New Testament begins with the account of the temptation in the wilderness, though of course our Lord had been paying it ever since His human soul was conscious of the difference between right and wrong, and it ends on the cross. To realize something of what it cost our Lord to live a life of perfect obedience to God's will, we must consider that He had to bear the whole burden of the sins and the consequent sinfulness of the race. We have tried to think of the condition of the race apart from Him, and of the utter selfishness in which practically the whole race lived. The will of God was scarcely being done at all anywhere on earth when Christ came! His mother is the marvellous exception to all human beings; her holiness is unaccountable to us. We can scarcely wonder that such a doctrine as that of the Immaculate Conception has been invented to account for it, even though this only produces an even greater difficulty farther back. But if we consider all the rest of the world from our Christian standpoint, the available evidence does but show us that, apart from a 'remnant' in the Jewish race and much smaller remnants proportionately in other nations, the whole world lay in the evil one, as S. John said.

Now consider how extremely difficult it is for any of us to do all God asks of us—how often we fail—how we have to struggle not to fail—we who belong to a race in which Christ's own life has been lived for centuries, who have received Him ourselves thousands of times! We are conscious that a great part of our difficulty comes from the fact that we are in contact with the rest of the race. That is why it is so specially hard in India. Yet our chief

connections are with Christian people; our relations are all Christians; we have inherited Christ's vast power from Christians. Consider, then, that Christ came when there was almost no Christian life in the race at all; that He, because He did truly become man, was in contact with the whole race, as we are; that because of His own flawlessness He could feel, as we cannot, the effect of all that was going on in it; and that almost nothing was going on in it but sin! 'I have trodden the wine-press alone; and of the people there was none with me.'[1] The story of the temptation in the wilderness gives us the true picture of Christ's human soul fighting alone with all the power of evil—alone, that is, in the sense that no human being was with Him. (Even His holy mother could not yet understand what His work and conflict were.) His soul was indeed in perfect union with God at each stage of its growth, but it was the only soul that was bearing the sin of the world. Such words as 'who his own self bare our sins,'[2] 'He was made sin for us,'[3] or, 'having become a curse for us,'[4] are to be considered in the light of all this. Also, our Lord's words in Gethsemane and on the cross, seen in this light, seem to teach us that, as His life went on and His soul grew in power of obedience, 'the things which he suffered' from the sinfulness of the race became more, until He had borne all that His perfect human soul, so full of tremendous power because of the fact that it was *His* human soul, could possibly bear—i.e. until He had become a complete 'offering for sin.'

We can get a faint idea of the kind of suffering sinfulness causes to one who is holy, from human experience, either our own or that of others; of the agony which is caused to very pure and holy people by the knowledge of others' bad sins, or by evil suggestions made to them by the devil. But what would the sins of the world, so far as we know them, mean to us, if we were absolutely holy! What must they have meant to the human soul

[1] Isa. lxiii. 3.
[2] 1 S. Pet. ii. 24.
[3] 2 Cor. v. 21.
[4] Gal. iii. 13.

of the Son of God! It is for us to ponder over all this, especially in Passiontide each year.

What was effected by the Perfect Obedience of Christ's Human Will.—S. Paul expresses this in two very difficult phrases: 'He died to sin once for all,'[1] and 'He condemned sin in the flesh.'[2] The pressure of human sin had been upon Him all His life, to press His soul down and prevent Him from doing God's will. But He resisted the pressure always. The pressure culminated in His death, i.e. He felt the pressure to the uttermost. This is why the great stress is laid on Christ's death in the New Testament. He resisted and overcame the power of evil in human nature to the uttermost. All the human power He had was used in this contest, and He was quite faithful in the whole use of it right up to the end. Hence 'he condemned sin in the flesh,' i.e. the whole force of sin was brought to bear upon Him, and He utterly rejected and overcame it with His whole force up to and in the end. Hence it found no entrance into Him at all; it was condemned as impotent to hurt Him; it was excluded entirely from His human nature, which triumphed wholly over it. Hence, at His death, i.e. when the whole struggle was 'finished,' 'he died unto sin once for all'—left it altogether behind for ever. Thus at His death human nature existed, which was absolutely sinless and which sin could never hurt. His was not the sinlessness of innocence which had never been tried, but sinlessness which was the complete triumph over all that sin could do to Him, in all parts of His human nature: striving to get in, in vain, through every avenue. There was, therefore, no longer anything to hold His human nature back from perfect union with God in heaven,[3] for with the whole

[1] Rom. vi. 10. [2] Rom. viii. 3.

[3] This and all similar passages which speak of Christ *becoming* one with the Father in His human nature are not intended to imply any doubt as to the completeness of the Hypostatic Union—the union of the two natures in Christ—from the first. They only imply that human nature in Christ was made perfect step by step through Christ's repeated acts of obedience, till the whole was in perfect union with God and the instrument of His will.

of it He had done God's will. His Resurrection and Ascension were inevitable, that which was outward in them being merely the outward signs of the inward and spiritual union which His human soul had with the Godhead. This is not the place to discuss the Resurrection and Ascension, but only to show how they were the inevitable result of His death. It was inevitable that His human nature should ascend to the very highest point that is possible to a created nature. Hence Phil. ii. 9–11. Christ had ' released ' human nature from its former bondage and had made all parts of it instruments for the carrying out of God's will. God had lived in it while it was being tried ; now that it was perfected it must share His glory. It was His own nature and could do now all He wished, therefore it became filled with and the instrument of His heavenly life. God could now, and therefore of course did, fulfil the purpose for which man had originally been created, in the perfect humanity of Christ.

Consider next what Christ's perfect obedience had effected potentially for the whole race. We thought of Christ's union with the whole race, and that in consequence of this all the sinfulness of the race pressed on Him. Now we have to think of another consequence. Because He is in union with the whole race, therefore at His death His perfected human life was in union with it. There was then, therefore, the possibility that this new life could enter into all men, just as the old poison had hitherto. The indwelling Spirit of Christ[1] could correspond in its action with the indwelling sin.[2] Also, the entrance of Christ's Resurrection life into the rest of the race could correspond with that of the sinful life which came from Adam.[3] Each one who is born into the human race is of one blood with all the rest, and could therefore influence all the rest if his influence was strong enough. Each sinner, however, can at the best only influence a certain number of people. But when Christ, the Son of God, entered the human family, and when His human soul had at last become wholly united to His divinity, then there

[1] Rom. viii. [2] Rom. vii. 17. [3] Rom. v. 12–19.

was no limit to the amount of influence he might have on the whole of the rest of the human family. It takes a long time to make His influence felt throughout the race, and a still longer to induce men to submit to it—in other words, to be subdued by His love. But the full salvation of the whole race was in a sense accomplished at Christ's death, though the long process by which the race actually becomes new through Christ's influence was only then about to begin. Hence S. Paul's language in Romans v.

Romans v. 12–14 (see p. 51 *n.*) describes the parallelism between the work of the first and the second Adam.

Romans v. 15–21 describes the contrast between them and the superiority of Christ's work. If the act of Adam entailed such dire results, the effect of Christ's work must be very much greater in the other direction, so as not only to cancel the effect of the fall but also to bring vast added blessings to the race. Again, through the fault of Adam death began its reign ; but after Christ's Resurrection the life which has conquered death began its reign. Thus Christ's work has an effect for the whole race, which is as much greater than the effect of Adam's sin as life is greater than death. (But just as in the former case the effects of the fall only gradually showed themselves, so with the effect of Christ's work—' We see not yet all things subjected to him, but we behold Jesus. . . .')[1]

Compare the teaching of S. John's prologue, written after he had been contemplating Christ's life as a whole for very many years. ' The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us . . . full of grace and truth.' Then he thinks of Him as He is now, His flesh the perfect instrument of His life in heaven, and says, ' of his fulness (whose glory we beheld, the glory as of the only begotten from the Father) we all received, according to our wants, and grace for grace,' i.e. each blessing appropriated became the foundation of a greater blessing. Here are two distinct thoughts : (1) Christ's fulness is equivalent to the plenitude of all the

[1] Heb. ii. 8, 9.

divine powers and graces, which were concentrated absolutely in Christ, the incarnate Word.[1]

The divine life flows into and through Christ's human nature without hindrance. It is the instrument through which God gives *Himself* to His creatures. (2) 'All we' actually, and the whole race potentially, are through Christ in receipt of this life; for Christ in His human nature is united to us all. It is for God to say what the appointed channels and means are, by which this life flows to each, and what efforts on their part are necessary to get it, and what they are to do with it when they have received it. But now we are only concerned to realize that the fulness of the Godhead flows into and through Christ's human nature, because by His perfect obedience He had made all parts of it perfect instruments of the divine will. S. John and S. Paul are at one in their teaching on the subject. (See Rom. viii. 32, 38 f. 'The love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord' is the fulness of God mediated to us through Christ's nature.) The fulness of Christ is at our disposal; it is ours, and we can get it for ourselves and others according to the measure of our faith.

When we receive of Christ's 'fulness,' and through it gradually 'become fulfilled,' we live the same kind of life that Christ lived: we prevent sin from entering at any avenue, and we bear others' burdens and so fulfil the law of love. And, because we do belong to Christ and are in Him, there is no limit to our power of doing God's will and of loving our neighbours. The power of evil is as nothing compared with this power!

II. Christ effected a reconciliation (καταλλαγή), i.e. the making up of the foregoing enmity, or the causing an at-one-ment between God and man. The passages in which this is directly taught are Rom. v. 10, 11, xi. 15; 2 Cor. v. 18–20. Connected with these are such passages as speak of sin as enmity against God (Rom. viii. 7; James iv. 4), and of sinners as enemies to Him and alienated from Him, but brought back to Him by Christ Who is our peace and the maker of peace between God and man (Rom. v. 10, above; Col. i. 13–23; Eph. ii. 13–16).

[1] Cf. Col. i. 19, ii. 9; Eph. i. 23; iii. 19; iv. 13.

This second group of passages, like the first, is to be studied in the light of the teaching as to God's relation to fallen man, which we considered above (pp. 21–24).

The cause of the enmity between God and man was man's sinfulness, i.e. the alienation of his mind and will from God. And a double reconciliation was required : (*a*) of God with man ; for though, or rather because, God's love for man remains unchanged, He cannot be at peace with man, or otherwise than in a condition of active opposition to him, so long as man continues to live a deliberately sinful life (see, e.g., Rom. i. 18 ; S. John iii. 36 ; Eph. v. 6 ; Col. iii. 6 ; Rev. xix. 15 ; cf. Rom. ii. 5, v. 9 ; 1 Thess. i. 10 ; Rev. vi. 16) ; (*b*) of man with God, so that he repents of his sinful life, and ceases to be in a condition of alienation from God, and thus removes the cause of the enmity.

[*Note.*—It has been said that such a phrase as 'God being reconciled' is foreign to the language of the New Testament (e.g. Westcott, on 1 S. John i. 2, p. 85). But, as has been pointed out, the relation of God to sin is not merely passive, but active, and the language of the New Testament does certainly seem to teach a double καταλλαγή (reconciliation). See Sanday and Headlam, 'Romans,' pp. 129 f. ; and Trench, 'Synonyms of New Testament,' p. 279.]

This double reconciliation was effected by Christ actually in His own human nature, through His repentance for the sins of men and obedience to God, which were perfected on the cross (see 1 Pet. ii. 24 ; Heb. ix. 28 ; 2 Cor. v. 21 ; Gal. iii. 13 ; cf. Is. liii.) ; potentially for all men, because by reason of His union with the whole human family He can impart to all the rest the power of His own perfected human nature, by which they too can repent and attain to the same union of life with God in which He lives (1 Cor. i. 30 ; Eph. iv. 8–16, 20–24 ; ii. 17–22 ; Rom. vi. esp. 3–11 ; Gal. v. 24).

[S. Paul's teaching on this subject is set forth clearly and at length in Col. i. 13–23. We were under the power of darkness. God rescued us and transplanted us into the kingdom of the Son of His love ; i.e. He put us in living union with the Son, Who is as He is in mind and heart, both in His divine and human life. 'In whom,' i.e. through participation of Whose life, 'we have the redemption . . . the remission of sins' (cf. Eph. i. 7), because we can now repent—we have repented, through the influence of His repentance. He is the manifestation of

the invisible God, 'begotten before all worlds'; for He is the life of all things. (Cf. S. John i. 3 f). 'In him and through him have all things been created, and unto him all things tend, and he is before all things and in him all things hold together.' That is to say, He is all to all (though all are not yet conscious of this).

v. 18. And He Who has ever been in that relation to the natural creation is, as might be supposed, He by Whom the old creation is made new. He is 'the head of the body, the church': 'the beginning—the firstfruits from the dead,' the originating power—the source of new life. 'That in all things he might have the pre-eminence,' i.e. so that, as He is the source and beginning of life to the whole natural creation, He might be the same to the new spiritual creation.

v. 19. For it pleased God that in Him, in Whom is the fulness of the Godhead, should also be the fulness of the creation; i.e. that His permanent relation to the creation, old and new, should correspond with His relation to the Godhead. (Cf. 2 Cor. v. 18, above.)

v. 20. 'And through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross.'

v. 21. 'And you being in time past alienated and enemies in your mind in your evil works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death to present you holy and without blemish and unreproveable before Him.' Holy—without blemish—against whom no charge is brought! It is not that Christ's righteousness does instead of ours, but that through our union with Him His righteousness—His life—can become ours, if we will make it ours, with the result that we can be 'holy,' &c.

Consider the range of the Apostle's thought! Christ Who possesses in its fulness the life of God, and Who therefore is the source already of all the life they have, is to flow into all created persons, till all have become sharers in His holy divine life of perfect love. The ultimate unity, then, is Christ's life, which is the divine life, including in its grasp the whole creation, the whole rational part of which is to live consciously the life He lives. Thus, just as my personality is the power I have to flow into

others and find my life in them, God's personality is the power by which He flows into all creation, till it has all received Him up to the full extent of its capacity. So that whereas we and all men were once alienated from God, we now see God in Christ effecting a perfect reconciliation, i.e. fulfilling His original purpose for us all —the purpose which must be His, because He is 'light' and 'love'—in spite of man's disobedience.]

A double reconciliation was required.

(*a*) Something was required which would reconcile God to man. Theologians have often shrunk from saying this, because it seemed to detract from the perfection of God's love. But this is to explain away rather than to expound much of the teaching of the Bible; it is also to take an inadequate view of love.

It was natural that there should be a reaction against the teaching about hell, which prevailed through so many centuries, and which was reaffirmed at the Reformation. For this implied, if it did not directly teach, that God desired vengeance. Hence, the passages that speak of His wrath were passed over as much as possible by those who saw that vengeance was not consistent with perfect love. But the reaction has gone much too far in the other direction, until many have come to think of God as not minding sin very much, as being merely good-natured instead of loving. They adopt much the same attitude as the Israelites in Hosea's time, who thought returning to God was a very easy matter, because He was so indulgent;[1] but see God's answer.[2] Compare the Indian idea of God's mercy, which is equivalent to indulgence for sin.

Not only the Old Testament, but also the New Testament dwells very often on the wrath of God; and this wrath is a necessary aspect of His perfect love. The sinfulness and sins of men are ruining the people whom God loves, and are keeping them from the blessed life He has in store for them. Hence, God must be always not only in opposition to men's sinfulness but also to the sinners themselves, so long as they go on sinning. His will is entirely opposed—i.e. is in active

[1] Hosea vi. 1–3. [2] *Ibid. vv.* 4, 5.

opposition—to theirs. He cannot be at one with them. Hence His frequent punishment of them in the Old Testament. His is not personal resentment of injuries done to Him (Christ showed that very plainly in his Passion, during which He showed no resentment at all) ; but because He is love He is in a condition of active opposition to and hatred of evil wills and evil deeds which are causing such woe to His beloved creatures. And His forgiveness is not merely dropping the matter—not resenting—not wanting to take revenge ; it implies the restoration of the true relation between Him and man, which necessarily implies an entire change in the mind and will of the sinners. Herein lies the difficulty. God cannot be reconciled to man till man is of one mind with God as to sin and holiness. God cannot change ; He can only desire perfect goodness. The change must be in man ; and what is to effect it ?

(*b*) Something was required which would reconcile us to God, i.e. which would cause us to want what He wants—be of one mind and will with Him. Nothing which is done by another for us can effect this, unless and until it causes a change in our own minds and wills. In the last resort the reconciliation between each sinner and God has to be effected by the sinner himself : he has to bring his own mind and will into union with God's, instead of allowing them to remain in opposition to Him. In other words, the sinner's penitence is necessary before he can be reconciled to God. But penitence is in its full meaning—*μετάνοια*—a change of mind with regard to sin : not merely an emotion of self-hatred or disappointment with self, but a real and permanent change of attitude towards what is wrong, so that the sinner now loathes what he formerly loved. This will mean not only that he is sorry for the past, but that he is setting himself to keep away from it in future. The sinner has become a new man, so that whereas the trend of his being used to be away from God, now it is towards God, however haltingly he may go. Nothing short of this can effect reconciliation between the sinner and God. The question is, how can this change be wrought in man ? Obviously, man must remove the cause of the enmity. God cannot

remove it, if man does not ; for if God had had His way, there would never have been any enmity.

Consider how Christ worked and still works to effect this change in man, which results at once in reconciliation with God, Who waits always for this change in every man, and receives the man into union with Himself as soon as it is there.

Christ became the perfect penitent for the sins of man. This does not mean merely that He ' did penance ' for them, and by doing so offered to God what He was willing to consider an equivalent for the injury done to Him by men's sins. But it means that Christ felt men's sins as His own and was perfectly penitent for them ; i.e. He loathed them as He only could Who was Himself absolutely free from sin, and Who longed with the whole force of His being that man should be free from them. He was willing to sacrifice Himself to the uttermost, however much His human nature shrunk from it, that man's sin might be done away. Because of His union with the rest of the race, of which we have thought so often, He could and did feel the sins of men as His own ; and because of His perfect holiness, He felt the evil of them to the uttermost. It broke His heart and caused His death. But this means that His human soul had become perfectly at one with God in regard to sin. The Man Christ Jesus hated it as God hates it, and gives Himself wholly, as God does, as a sacrifice by which it may be done away and God's will be done instead. Hence, at Christ's death the human and divine wills were at one. Each wanted God's will to be done, and was utterly opposed to any rebellion against it.

As we thought before[1] that sin and temptation assaulted every avenue in our Lord's human nature and failed at all : so, looking at it from this different point of view, we can say that temptation tried to make sin attractive to our Lord in some way and failed utterly to do so. The more He was tried, the more He loved God and gave Himself to Him, until on the cross, when the struggle culminated, He had become utterly faithful to God : in that last awful hour

[1] See pp. 63–5.

when the sense of God's presence and love was withdrawn from His human soul, he cried 'My God, my God,' as if to say, 'I want only Thee—nothing but Thee. My whole soul cries out for Thee.' Man in Christ then, tried to the uttermost, was indeed at one with God.

Each understands of this utter faithfulness of Christ what his own experience enables him to understand. How far do we know what it is to persist in doing God's will when we can neither see nor feel that any good is coming from it? We can all enter more or less into Elijah's experience.[1] We have all known what it is to come to an end of our powers of endurance, to say 'I can't stand any more; I must have some consolation.' Many lose their faith in God's love at this point, and many get some consolation which they know God does not mean them to have. But Christ's human soul was wholly faithful—wanted nothing but God and His will, even when it felt no support or joy at all in its faithfulness. He could not be induced to make the least bargain with what was not God's will, but hated sin as He loved God.

Men have been and are hindered from realizing this truth about Christ's self-identification with sinners, so that He could be penitent for their sins, because of their difficulty in understanding that 'vicarious penitence' is possible. Yet it is quite a familiar experience with us; in fact, we know well by experience that the truest penitence for the worst sins comes as a rule not from the sinners who have committed them, but from others who are holy and connected with the sinners. And we can see that if there is no such thing as vicarious penitence, there can never be a complete reconciliation between God and sinners at all. For sinners, so far as they are sinners, are impenitent. How are they to become penitent, except through the influence of some holy person outside them? The penitence of sinners themselves can never be perfect: there is always mixed up with it some love of sin, and 'the more sinful a man is the less is he capable of the penitence that really cleanses.[2] Here in India we have become quite accustomed to seeing

[1] 1 Kings xix. 3, 4. [2] *Foundations*, p. 308.

how the healing penitence for the awful sin committed by Indian women comes not from the women, but from one or other of you Sisters, who are yourselves incapable of doing the sins they do, and yet can, because of your connection with the women and your union with Christ, feel their sins almost as if they were your own.

We have dwelt on this before, in considering the Incarnation as the supreme manifestation of God's love, i.e. of His power to make Himself one with others—even the worst of sinners—who are utterly unlike Him in thought and life. Our own experience, therefore, interprets to us this teaching of the New Testament and enables us, partially at least, to understand how Christ reconciled man with God in His own personal life.

To consider the potential reconciliation of the whole race which Christ effected, it is necessary to bear in mind what we said under the former head, *The Cost to Christ of our Redemption*.[1] But, in addition to that, consider what we can learn from our own experience as to the effect of vicarious penitence on sinners who at first repented not. Take a famous instance from fiction, that of Emily and Mr. Peggotty, in 'David Copperfield.' She came to the truest repentance for her sin through seeing the effect of it on him. The story illustrates a very frequent experience. Vicarious repentance 'shows up' sin more vividly than anything else—far more so than punishment does. Punishment shows it up to those who are in such a low-spirited condition that they cannot be appealed to by anything but punishment, like most of the Jews. But punishment only produces penitence of a low kind; it cannot do more than make a beginning. The knowledge of the grief that our sin is causing to those who love us makes a far higher appeal, to those who are capable of receiving it, and produces a far higher kind of penitence. For example, women here, who repent at first because of the miserable state their sin has brought them to, afterwards repent far more really when they understand that it causes great grief to you Sisters. Think, then, how

[1] Pp. 63–5.

Christ's perfect penitence gradually spreads through the human race. His perfect human life can and does pass from Him to His disciples, because of His union with the whole race. In every age, as in the first after His Ascension, it enters into those chosen ones who become at once His very faithful disciples. Through the tremendous influence of His life which they receive, they look on sin as He looked on it (in their measure), and their whole lives become a great force which opposes it utterly—hates it and shows its deadly nature, even though through weakness of the flesh they themselves sometimes fall into it. Through their lives, others with whom they are in contact come to learn how dreadful a thing sin is : it is ' shown up ' to them by the grief it evidently causes to these holier ones. (What wonderful examples of this we read of in the lives of the saints !) So they too come to repent, and in turn are able to influence impenitent sinners with whom they come in contact to ' change their minds.' Thus, the race is gradually brought to think about sin and holiness as God does ; brought to have ' the mind of Christ,' and so to be reconciled with God and in future to be on His side in the struggle against sin and for the complete holiness of the race. And when once man is at one with God in mind and heart, then God is at one with him as He had always longed to be. For God's forgiveness is not merely mercy which remits penalty for offences done ; it is the result of the overflowing love of God, which goes forth ' to seek and save that which was lost,' and which therefore receives the sinner into the closest union as soon as he is capable of it, i.e. as soon as he truly repents. Compare our own experience. If someone has been doing us injuries—has been against us, we may be quite willing to drop our resentment ; but there can be no real union of friendship between us till he has repented. When he does, then if the Spirit of Christ rules us we can live in close union with him, in spite of the past. ' If he repent, forgive him,' says our Lord, Who also enables us to fulfil His injunction.

III. Christ made, or rather Himself is, a ' propitiation ' (ἱλασμός) for the sins of the whole world ; i.e. He gained man's

' reconciliation ' with God by means of the propitiatory offering of Himself, which culminated on the cross.

[*Note.*—' As compared with καταλλαγὴ, ἱλασμός is the deeper word, goes more to the innermost heart of things.' It shows how the reconciliation was brought about, and implies satisfaction, propitiation, the mediator, the High Priest, which καταλλαγὴ does not. (See Trench, ' Synonyms of the New Testament,' p. 282.)]

1 S. John ii. 2, iv. 10 ; cf. Rom. iii. 25 (Christ our ἱλαστήριον) ; Col. i. 20 ; Heb. ii. 17. With these passages are directly connected the following, which speak of Christ under several images as the sacrifice offered for us : Eph. i. 7 ; ii. 13 ; v. 2 ; Heb. x. 10, 12, 14 ; vii. 27 ; xiii. 11, 12 ; ix. ; 1 Cor. v. 7 ; 1 S. John i. 7 ; v. 6, 8 ; S. John i. 29, 36 ; 1 S. Peter i. 2, 19 ; Rev. i. 5 ; v. 6–14 ; xiii. 8, &c. Cf. S. Matt. xxvi. 28 ; S. Mark xiv. 24.

[*Note.*—This word ' propitiation ' corresponds with the Hebrew *kipper* and its derivatives, which are used frequently in the Old Testament. Its root meaning is ' to cover up,' used in a moral sense of guilt ; ' to cover by a gift,' or (if God is the subject) to treat as covered. The object of *kipper* is usually an individual or the community, but sometimes also a material object. (Lev. xvi. 18, 20, 33.) The main idea expressed by it is ' propitiation ' made for sin, chiefly by the sin-offering, and therein by the sacrifice of the blood or life. It is unfortunate, says Dr. Driver, that the word is still translated in the Old Testament (R.V.) by atonement, which has changed its meaning since 1611 from ' reconciliation ' to the modern ' making amends ' or ' reparation.' But *kipper* means more than to reconcile : it means ' to propitiate by an offering,' and is nearly always translated in the LXX by ἱλασμὸς or cognate words.]

The nature of the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, and the reason why it was sufficient as a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, are to be considered in connection with what we have thought of the reconciliation which Christ effected. His sacrifice was the offering of His human life of perfect obedience to God's will, i.e. of perfect love to God and man—a life the cost of which He learned through His sufferings, which culminated in His death on the cross.

This ' oblation of himself once offered ' is ' a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the

whole world,' (1) because it was at once a full manifestation of God's righteousness and a perfect submission to it on the part of man, and (2) because it was the sacrifice of Him Who is the head of and source of new life to the whole human race, and therefore contains the power by which all the members of the race can truly repent of their sins and live according to God's will. (See especially Rom. iii. 21–26.)

The references show that it is the teaching of the New Testament generally that Christ offered a sacrifice which propitiated God and is the cause why the sins of all men can be forgiven; and also that this apostolic teaching was begun by our Lord Himself,[1] Who spoke of His coming death as a sacrifice by which the new Covenant was to be inaugurated. The chief passages I have tried to classify: many more might be added. They show 'that the religion of the New Testament, like the religion of the Old Testament, has the idea of sacrifice as one of its central conceptions, not however scattered over an elaborate ceremonial system, but concentrated in a single many-sided and far-reaching act.'[2] That act is the death of Christ considered as the culminating act of His earthly life. They show, further, that the Old Testament is related to the New Testament as the history of the preparation for Christ, and throw a light on the elaborate system of Jewish sacrifices which culminated in the Day of Atonement. The spiritual significance of the Jewish sacrifices can only be seen in the light of Christ's sacrifice, which was prophesied indeed in Isaiah liii., but never understood till Christ came. Men are very slow to grasp the thoughts of God, and it was inevitable that a selfish, sinful race should have to be educated by slow degrees to understand the wonder of God's own sacrifice. The idea that some offering was needed was in man, the Bible says, from the earliest times; and this is borne out by the religious history of most peoples. But men naturally thought of offerings as necessary to appease the anger of God, or gods—something which would do instead of the offering of the man himself, which

[1] S. Matt. xxvi. 28; S. Mark xiv. 24; and cf. 1 Cor. xi. 25.
[2] Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, p. 92.

God really wanted. The Old Testament system of sacrifice taught the Jews something of the holiness of God and His hatred of sin, and a great deal about man's need of purification ; for it must be remembered that for the greater sins no sacrifices availed ; they were punished by death. Further, the ritual pointed to the fact that the value of a sacrifice lay not in the death of the victim, but in the offering of his life. Death was only the necessary process by which his blood or life was freed to become a propitiation. Then the virtue of the blood or life availed for bringing sinners into contact with God. Thus God educated His people towards the knowledge that what He was waiting for was the perfect offering of a perfect life, and that this life wholly offered would enable sinners to give up their sins and offer themselves as obedient, living sacrifices.

But even now that Christ has come and has taught how His sacrifice fulfilled all the old ideas which were taught through the Old Testament system, men are very slow to grasp the truth. They still persist in thinking that God required and has received something which suffices instead of the offering of the lives of men and women, something which appeases His wrath and enables Him to do without man's true offering. Hence, it is necessary to dwell again on the sacrifice of Christ and see what the New Testament teaches as to why it was sufficient as a propitiation for the sins of the world. For this, we must remember what we considered before, that nothing could effect man's 'redemption' from sin, except something through which men themselves could gain the power to obey God ; that nothing could possibly reconcile God to man, except something which should avail to take away the cause of the enmity, i.e. man's own alienation of mind and will from God. No sacrifice could effect this or appease God, which left man as he was—sinful. Nothing can save man but some power which changes his character.

It is only when this is clearly grasped that we can apprehend, without being misled by it, that the whole salvation of mankind was, and is effected by vicarious sacrifice. It is Christ's perfect life of love to God and

men—love which human nature would never have possessed, if Christ had not lived and loved in human nature—which redeems mankind. It is the inflow of it into human beings which alone can make them penitent and loving. This is the great law of redemption, so to call it, which is being manifested now in all parts of the human family on earth. Take the example we took before: a sinful woman comes here, and you suffer, for her, pain of soul which she cannot yet have herself. You suffer this because of your love to God and to her. And because you do suffer it (not merely because of the fact that she sees you do), and because you are in contact with her, your loving life gradually flows into her and makes her, or tends to make her, penitent and loving. Any new work of rescue which you are contemplating will depend for its success on the amount of love to God and the women you are willing to give—i.e. on your vicarious sacrifice for them. This can enter into the women and transform their characters.

Our whole previous examination of the doctrine of the Atonement has, it is to be hoped, helped to make the meaning of Christ's propitiatory sacrifice clear. The most complete summary of the whole doctrine is contained in the passage referred to, though it would be far too difficult a summary to understand apart from the rest of New Testament teaching. A detailed examination of the passage, in the light of all the other passages we have considered, ought to help us to gather up into one the truth about the Atonement which is taught so variously in the New Testament.

Romans iii. 21–26. S. Paul at the opening of the Epistle had said that the Gospel is 'the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth. . . . For therein is revealed a righteousness of God by faith unto faith. . . .'[1] Then he proceeds to show at length how greatly the whole world needed this righteousness; how unrighteous man was, Jew as well as Gentile. For though the Jews had the great advantage of the Law, yet that did not and could not make them righteous; it only gave them the

[1] Rom. i. 16, 17.

knowledge of sin (iii. 20), and therefore of their great need of righteousness. This brings us to our passage. Here, he says, the new order of things comes in.

v. 21. 'Now,' under the Christian dispensation, 'apart from law,' independently of it, for the law does not effect anything, it only says what ought to be done, 'a righteousness of God' (the righteousness he has had in view all along is nothing less than God's own righteousness, cf. S. Matt. v. 48; S. Luke vi. 36; 1 S. Peter i. 15, 16; the Gospel is that this can be obtained by man) 'hath been manifested,' i.e. in Christ's life and death, cf. 1 S. John i. 2, 'being witnessed by the law and the prophets,' i.e. having been specially prepared for by the whole Old Testament dispensation (cf. i. 2, iii. 31, iv. &c.), God's whole plan, as recorded in the Old and New Testament, being therefore one; [*v.* 22] 'even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ,' i.e. a righteousness of God which can be gained by men through faith in, or attachment to, Christ Jesus.

'Unto all them that believe,' i.e. the one necessary condition for obtaining and living by God's righteousness is union with Jesus Christ; in Him is the righteousness of all men; from Him it is gained by faith, not merely by believing it is there and that He has done something for us, but by the faith which is equivalent to trustful and loving union with Him; 'for there is no distinction'; [*v.* 23] 'for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God.'

To be taken as if in brackets, it contains the explanation of all [*v.* 22*a*]. 'All have sinned'—Jew as well as Gentile—'and fall short of the glory of God,' i.e. the glory of God which ought to have been manifested in humanity from the first. [*v.* 24] 'Being justified freely by his grace,' being accepted as righteous, because through Christ they can all become actually righteous. This righteousness which Christ has made possible for all was not earned by man; he has not done anything to deserve it; he has only sinned and 'fallen short.' We are saved by God's free gift of Himself to us (see v. 8, 10; Titus iii. 4–7, &c.).

Christ, as we have thought so often, offered to God a life of perfect obedience in our nature, which man apart from Him could not have offered. Yet it must be observed that S. Paul nowhere says that Christ's righteousness does instead of ours, so that it does not matter whether we are righteous or not ; this is contradicted by the whole teaching of Christ and His Apostles, though unbalanced and therefore false and even absurd teaching has often been given on the subject by some sects of Christians, as if God could accept and be pleased with us because of Christ, quite apart from what we ourselves are like! He does accept all mankind because of Christ, as potentially in Christ and therefore as capable of becoming righteous, but no man actually lives in union with God unless he is through Christ's grace actually righteous. 'Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,' i.e. through the awful cost which Christ was willing to pay for our redemption, and of which we have thought at length. The righteousness of God can be possessed by man through faith in Christ, because of the fact that Christ brought humanity to God, as He did.

v. 25. 'Whom God set forth publicly, a propitiation,' i.e. as one Who did all His will, though it cost so much to do it, in our nature, and through union with Whom all can do it, and therefore as the offerer of a sacrifice which was propitiatory.

'Through faith,' i.e. the rest of men can be in this union with Christ, so that His sacrifice avails for them, only through faith, 'by his blood.' The propitiation was, as we have thought, in the sacrificed life of Christ, which life could be imparted to others, just as in the case of the Jewish typical sacrifices the blood set free by death could be sprinkled on others. These foreshadowed the life of Christ, which was made perfect at His death, and which availed for the sanctification of the rest of men, because it could be imparted to them and made their own by their faith.

'To show his righteousness.' Christ's death proclaimed for the first time what God thought of sin, what He is and feels in relation to it. This had never been

proclaimed before, because no one had been found on earth capable of understanding or submitting to it. No sinner can understand or feel what God sees in sin, for every sinner more or less acquiesces in it. Only He Who is Himself God can know perfectly what sin does to God. The Crucifixion of Christ, with all that is told us about it, manifested it to men. Think how much people change in their idea of sin and the awfulness of it, as they rise from sinfulness to holiness. Consider the sufferings the sins of men have caused to some of the saints, e.g. S. Francis of Assisi; or think how such a man as Dr. Pusey came to feel about his own sins. His language implies that he had committed the greatest crimes; but of course it was that his nearness to God showed him how awful were such sins as ordinary people call small. But yet in this life even the best people are only beginning to know what sin means to God. It has always crucified God! The Crucifixion of Christ was a manifestation at a certain time in the world's history of an abiding fact. Sin causes that to God always, but He could never before make man understand this; man could not share His agony at sin till Christ came, and did feel it in our nature.

'Because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God,' i.e. God could only show a partial enmity to sins in past time, so that it seemed that He forgave easily—did not really think them very bad, for this was all that even the Jews could bear. A greater revelation would have been beyond their powers altogether. We wonder, as we read their history, that God's punishments, pestilence, captivity, &c., as well as the words of the prophets did not have more effect. The fact is that they were too far gone in sin to feel what sin is in God's sight, and the rest of the world knew nothing of God's essential holiness. Hence, Acts xiv. 16, xvii. 30; cf. Ps. l. 21.

We in India can see what S. Paul's meaning is. The people of India sin habitually in all kinds of loathsome ways, and, except where the influence of Christ's life is felt, think nothing of it. It seems to them that God does

not mind much; a few sacrifices will appease Him. A bathe in the sacred Ganges will put all right.

v. 26. 'For the showing (I say) of his righteousness at this present season.' Because He had to pass over sins before, therefore He desired to and did display His righteousness at the present time, i.e. as soon as it was made possible for Him to do it by Christ's perfect obedience to all His will.

'That he might himself be righteous, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus,' i.e. that in His dealing with sin and sinful men He might manifest wholly what He is, deal with sin as it ought to be dealt with—might fulfil, carry out His will fully, as He never could before till Christ became man, and also be able to declare righteous him who believes in Jesus, him whose ruling motive is faith in Jesus—for then he can be righteous as Christ is.

Christ's sacrifice has enabled God to manifest fully His real attitude to sin, and also to admit sinners into union with Himself, because they can believe in Jesus and thus partake of His righteousness and make it their own, and so share God's attitude towards sin. Thus S. Paul expresses the perfection of the propitiation wrought by Christ. Sin had had the effect of preventing man not only from doing God's will, but also from understanding His nature and purpose. So far as man is a sinner, he cannot understand what perfect holiness is and feels. God had therefore to be content even in the case of the best of men with a partial service. But now 'in Christ' man is perfectly one with God in mind and will, and all men at last can be. We in this life cannot realize much of this, only enough to repent of the sins we know of and to do God's will so far as He can tell us what it is. But we are 'in Christ,' and that means that some day we shall be one with God in His attitude to sin, shall realize what our sins have really done to God, and shall therefore love Him and do His will perfectly so far as our capacity extends. (It is certainly terrifying to think what it will be to see our sins as God sees them; but when we do we shall also love God more perfectly, so that the knowledge of our past failures will make us long to serve Him faithfully for ever.)

And we must observe that it is through our love of God that we are to learn how hateful sin is to Him—not through punishment, as in the case of the Jews, but through the love we gain through our union with Jesus Christ.

From the consideration of the human offering, whereby Christ made man at one with God and effected the potential salvation of the whole race, we must return to the truth with which we began, that it was God Himself, and no other, Who made the offering.

Man was ransomed from the bondage of sin, reconciled or made one with God, by the sacrifice of God's own life, which God Himself offered for him.

This truth is in no wise contradicted or minimized, though it is often obscured, by the fact that God's offering of Himself was made in and through human nature. (E.g. Rom. v. 8 ; viii. 39 ; S. John iii. 16.) And this leads us towards the fuller realization of the truth taught in the New Testament, that the Incarnation and Atonement are not accidents in the life of God, but are of the essence of His Being. In past ages inadequate philosophical notions of the Being of God have caused Christian theology to stop short of this.

Yet the New Testament, when it is considered in itself and apart from *a priori* conceptions of God's Being, is seen to teach clearly that the life of Jesus Christ is the eternal life of God manifested ; and further that, apart from uncertain glimpses of it which we can gain from ' nature ' (Rom. i. 20), we only know what God's one eternal life is through the manifestation of it which is given in Jesus Christ. See, e.g., 1 S. John i. 12 ; iv. 9, 10 ; S. John i. 1–5 ; v. 16, 19 ; viii. 16, 19, 58 ; x. 30 ; xiv. 6, 9, 10 ; 2 Cor. v. 19 ; Col. i. 19, 20.

The New Testament thus teaches that God did not begin a new relationship with man when Jesus was born, but only began to manifest His permanent relationship with him, and in such a way as to enable man to make his true response to it.

Hence—this is perhaps the best way in which we can bring this great truth home to ourselves—God did not feel man's sorrows and sins for the first time during Christ's earthly life, nor did He cease to feel them after Christ's Ascension ; but it is of the essence of His Being to feel them. The sins of men have always crucified God, and will always do so till they cease ; the sorrows of men must always cause God sorrow till the time comes when all tears will be wiped away.

But the atoning work of Christ caused an all-important change. To understand the change in God's relation to sinful and suffering humanity which was effected at Christ's death, we must consider the Atonement in connection with the truth about God's nature which is expressed in the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity.

God teaches us that His Spirit, or love, is at once the giving of the Father to the Son—the free gift of God's whole Being—and the giving of the Son to the Father, which is the perfect filial response of grateful love. And the change which Christ effected for man, and therefore in God's relation to him, is that whereas before man did not respond to the love God freely gave him, now in Christ Jesus he shares in that perfect filial response which is the Son's eternal gift of Himself to the Father. Therefore God can regard the race, so far as it is 'in Christ,' as actually now sharing in His own life, and the whole race, of which Christ is the head, as potentially doing so.

When, at the end of His life of perfect obedience, Christ's human heart broke on the Cross, because He felt no longer in communion with God, then man was indeed one with God in heart and will. The perfect response to God's love had been made by man. The salvation of the whole race had become possible. All men could now be regarded as potential sons of God. And the joyful work of bringing all men, one by one, into complete union with God could begin. See Rom. v. 10, 11 ; vi. 3–10 ; viii. 1–4, 14–17 ; Phil. ii. 8–11 ; Col. i. 19, 20 ; Heb. ii. 6–10, 14, 15 ; ix. 15, 26.

We have dwelt so much on the fact that the offering by which Christ redeemed the world was a human offering, and that the Gospel is the good news not so much of what God has done for us as of what He enables man to do, that we must beware of obscuring the truth that the offerer is none other than God Himself. God—the Son of God and no other person—was born of Mary, lived, worked, suffered, bore our sins, died . . . all the human experiences of Christ of which we read in the New Testament were the experiences of God. He, God, was hungry, weak, tempted, insulted, crucified, deserted by His special friends.

And, as we have thought, God had not to become less than God, or divest Himself of any of His attributes, in order to undergo these experiences. It is of the essence

of His being that He could and did undergo them; in fact, it is through these experiences that He has given us the fullest revelation we have of His nature and life. If we are asked what we know about God's nature and life, we must answer, 'All we really know about it is that it is the nature and life of Jesus Christ.' And though we may be sure that God has still much more to reveal about Himself, yet the New Testament teaches that the revelation given in Christ is a real, true revelation, and the fullest we can have on earth, of the eternal glory of God. 'We beheld his glory.' 'The life was manifested. . . .' 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.'

The character of Christ is the character of God, and the life of Christ is the life of God, so far as we can at present behold it. But if so, we cannot stop there, but must advance towards a fuller recognition of the truth which Christ teaches that it is essential to God to live a 'human life,' because He loves man so much that He must make Himself one with man. The true life of man consists in filial love of God, and this filial love is a quality of God Himself.

The doctrine of the Holy Trinity—the summary of New Testament teaching as to the being of God—teaches us that God is the Son as well as the Father, and His Spirit is the eternal living relation between the two. And the Son is the Man Christ Jesus, Who lives as head of our race and offers Himself perpetually in loving obedience to the Father. But this life of His is the life that God lives. Just as a human being can live as father and son at the same time, so God eternally lives as both, and His love or Spirit is the love of each for the other, and Christ's human life is now for ever included in the life of Divine Sonship. Further, the New Testament is full of the teaching that Christians are one with Christ, so far as they will consent to be. 'Christ liveth in me.' We are one with Christ, and Christ is one with the Father.[1]

The great truth that the Incarnation and Atonement leads us to is that one conscious life fills the universe—the life or love of God; that God and men live this life

[1] See 1 Cor. iii. 23–24; cf. S. John xvii. 20–23.

together, so far as man will consent to do so ; and that the consummation is the coming together of all men into a full participation of this one life. We are not to be hindered in the realization of this truth by the old distinction between the divine and human natures, the divine being infinitely above the human. That is not Christ's teaching, which is that God and all the millions of human persons are at last to live one life together, the very essence of which life is that no one can think himself above the others, but only as one with them. See this plainly put in S. John xvii. 20–23, 26. Christians usually have been afraid to think this means even as much as it seems to say clearly. 'We are always in danger of leaving out of our conception of God some of the most precious things in human experience, in deference to some false idea of divine dignity.'[1] On the contrary we should be ready to believe that the union spoken of by our Lord is a far closer and more real one than we can imagine. God Whose love is perfect must be far more in our lives, sharing our experiences, than any mother can be in her child, or lover or friend in his beloved. And so far as God's part is concerned the consummation for which Christ prayed has been realized. He is one with us in all our experiences now—feels what we feel with us, and is always striving to get us to think and feel what He does. He lives man's life, that we may live His !

It would have been seen long ago that all this is involved in the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation, but for the Jewish exaggerated doctrine of the transcendence of God which entered the Christian Church in its first generation; and for the philosophical tenets, to a large extent introduced from the heathen East, as to God's being ; e.g. that He is by nature impassive, immovable, one Who cannot be affected by acts of His creatures, &c. This was taught with great emphasis by the schoolmen, especially S. Thomas Aquinas.

Hence it was thought that God, Who could not be 'moved' by man's sins or sorrows in His own nature, felt them for the first time when He took our nature, and ceased

[1] *Foundations*, p. 511.

to feel them when He ascended, because then His human nature was caught up into perfect union with the divine life, and so was in perfect beatitude, with which sorrow is incompatible. And to account for the difficulties in the way of this view, it was supposed that Christ in His short earthly life felt to the full in His human soul all the effects of all the sins that ever had been or were to be committed! How often, for example, have we been told 'your sins caused Christ's Passion,' meaning that they were felt by Him in Gethsemane and on the Cross (and how unreal it has seemed to many of us!

But when the New Testament teaching about God is examined, apart from any *a priori* conceptions of His nature, it is seen to be quite different from this. 'God is love' is the burden of it, and love in God is the same thing that we mean by love. Its nature and quality are manifested in Christ, and thus it is seen to be the love of one Who perfectly enters into and sympathizes with all human life; one Who is terribly affected by men's sins and sorrows.

It is sufficient to sum up thus. Now that we know Christ's life, not only as it was when He was on earth, but also as it has been and is in the lives of His best disciples, we are obliged to say that God would not be love if He were by nature the impassive being that philosophy depicts Him. For anyone who truly loves must be affected joyfully or sorrowfully by all that happens in the lives of those whom he loves. And we are brought to acknowledge the wonderful truth that the eternal God, our Father, shares now and always in our lives. He sorrows with our sorrows. For example, because we know that Jesus wept on account of the sorrow of Mary and Martha when Lazarus died, therefore we know that God feels with us all the sorrow we feel at the death of anyone whom we love, just because we feel it. It is of His essence to do this. He rejoices in our joys, and is still crucified and made to suffer by our sins, so that instead of saying 'Our sins caused the Passion of Christ,' we should say 'Our sins *cause* the Passion of God,' and answer to the great appeal

of the Apostle 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.'[1] Then we realize more fully what sort of love is flowing into us moment by moment—the love of one Who constantly forgives all the daily injuries He feels so deeply; Who always looks beyond them into the depths of our being where the possibilities of good are; and Who thanks us with infinitely more gratitude than any other can feel for any loving service we do to Him or our fellows, for any sacrifice of our own pleasure that we make for the sake of spreading His kingdom.

Christ evidently means us to read all that is written in the Gospels in this light, and especially all the parables in which He explained what the love of God is, e.g. in S. Luke xv. Those are pictures not merely of what Christ felt once long ago, but of what God feels always—of what it is His eternal nature to feel: longing for each person, grief at his sins, which is accompanied, however, with the belief that he will come back and give them up, and with joy such as we can only faintly understand when he does come back. How this lights up afresh the whole New Testament! We can think of God as affected now by all that we do, as rejoicing over all the progress in love which you make day by day, and as embracing you afresh day by day, as He welcomes your growing oneness with Himself.

That there might be complete union of will between God and man, it was necessary that man should with all his heart desire communion with God, and hate with all his heart whatever prevented this communion. Hitherto, the race of men, with a few exceptions, had not wanted communion with God, but to go their own way; and the more they had done this the more they had sinned and the less they had cared or thought about communion with God. But Christ, bearing the sins of the world and realizing sin as that which prevented communion with God, and therefore hating it and suffering unspeakably because of it, i.e. longing for God more and more as communion with Him became more difficult, at last on the Cross arrived at the awful condition of realizing man's sin as that which

[1] Eph. iv. 30.

had made communion with God altogether impossible. And then, instead of yielding in any degree to the temptation to be content with something else, and though He could not feel any of the joy which communion with God brings, yet He longed for God with all the force of which His human nature was capable, and His heart broke because He could in no way and for no reason bear to be separated from His God. This means the most perfect loyalty to God that there could be, and it was man's loyalty. It was the perfect response to God made by man—*the* Man Christ Jesus, the head of our race, Whose life is flowing to all parts of it ; in and through Whom therefore all men can at last make to God the perfect filial response of love as His true sons. Hence the great stress laid in the New Testament on Christ's death as a sacrifice for us. It was by His death that His sacrifice of giving up Himself to God was perfected.

Thus the Atonement can be said to have been finished on the Cross, in the sense that that was accomplished which made the salvation of the whole world possible. For, as soon as man's response was complete, and his will in union with God's, God could give him all He had been longing to give since He first made him. Man's Resurrection and Ascension therefore follow as a consequence of Christ's perfect obedience, as well as the gift of eternal life for all men. Hence, with the consideration of the passages here referred to, we can bring to an end our discussion of what Christ effected in the period between His Incarnation and death on the Cross.

Rom. v. 10, 11. 'We were reconciled to God through the death of his Son,' because He is our head and we are either actually or potentially in Him.

Rom. vi. 3–10. We Christians, in whom is becoming actual that which is potential for all men, when we 'were baptized into Christ' (cf. Gal. iii. 2) were baptized into His death, i.e. became actual sharers in that which He won by His death, and His death was a death unto sin once for all—a victory over the whole power of sin. Our baptism gives us a share in this victory, or rather in the power or life which won it.

vv. 5–11. Hence all is possible to those who are faithful after baptism. Christ, as man, having died once for all unto (in relation to) sin, lives henceforward for God alone. No other power *κυριεύει αὐτοῦ* but God: and thus it is or can be with all who are 'in Christ.'

Rom. viii. 1–4. The law had no power to save man from sin; it could only show him what sin is. But Christ, as man, 'condemned sin in the flesh,' i.e. won a complete victory over it, and so condemned it as impotent to overcome Him. And He did this for our sake, that we all through Him might be able to fulfil God's law. For . . .

Rom. viii. 14–17. We have all received, and all men can receive, the Spirit or the life by which we can cry 'Father,' i.e. live as His true sons, 'heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ,' sharing both in His struggles and in His glory.

Phil. ii. 8–11. The Resurrection and Ascension of Christ and His exaltation over all creation follows as the direct consequence of His perfect obedience, which became complete at His death on the Cross.

vv. 10, 11. And His exaltation over all creation means, as the context shows, that He is not merely in a position of pre-eminence over it all, but in such a relation to it that He can bring all the rational beings in it to acknowledge Him as their Lord, and become His faithful, loving disciples, 'to the glory of the Father.' (Cf. 1 Cor. xv. 20–28.)

Col. i. 19, 20. The Father's way of reconciling all things to Himself was to send His Son to 'make peace through the blood of his cross,' i.e. to bring man into perfect union with Himself through the offering of Christ's life of obedience which culminated on the Cross. This made possible the long, gradual process of reconciling all the individuals of the race.

Heb. ii. 6–18. God, to bring the race of man into complete union with Himself, and so to exalt it above all creatures, sent His Son Jesus to be head of the race and to live the perfect life of obedience which cost Him His Passion. Christ tasted death *ὑπὲρ παντὸς* not 'in place of' but 'on behalf of' every man. To taste death is to

feel the whole bitterness of death, the sting of which is sin : Christ met and conquered all that sin and temptation can do to human nature ; won the victory for all men. Therefore He was exalted, and though as yet we see not the exaltation of the whole race, yet we know that His is its potential exaltation, for He is truly one with the whole race of man. (Cf. the whole passage, Heb. viii.–x. 18, which is considered at length under the Ascension.)

S. John xix. 34 f. This tells of the wonderful sign which took place at Christ's death, by which were signified the results which would flow from that death—the gifts of cleansing and new life for all men.

It is difficult for us to realize at all clearly the truth which, as we have seen, the New Testament teaches in manifold ways that Christ's sacrifice of Himself is sufficient to effect the salvation of all men—that His perfect obedience is the potential obedience of all men to God's will. We are not to think that God accepted Christ's sacrifice instead of the sacrifice of all men, as He was supposed in Old Testament times to accept sacrifices of animals instead of the sacrifice of sinners. He only accepts Christ's sacrifice as sufficient, because it actually is so. Nothing can satisfy Him finally except the actual surrender of all the individuals of the race to Him. Nothing can do instead of that. He can only regard the whole race now as potentially saved by Christ, because the power of Christ is actually sufficient to enable all men at last to offer themselves completely to Him.

All that is now needed is the means by which all sinners can be brought, one by one, within the sphere of His influence. These means are supplied in His Church, and they have already been found sufficient to transform every type of sinner.

We can proceed henceforth, therefore, with great joy to consider in our lectures the results of Christ's death which have been made known to us so far, and to consider them as an earnest of all the rest which God will reveal to us, and allow us to share in, in the world to come.

The Descent into Hades

'He descended into hell' (Apostles' Creed). 'Descended into hell' (Athanasian Creed).

[*Note.*—The word 'hell' in the Creed is the term used in old English to designate the world of the dead generally. Etymologically the term denotes the *covered, hidden, unseen* place, connected with the German *hehlen*, to hide, *hüllen*, to cover. It is applied to the world of the departed generally in Spenser, Chaucer, mediaeval plays, and in old English religious poetry. Hence its use here in the Creed, and in A.V., as an equivalent for the Hebrew Sheol, LXX ἅδης. It is now an entirely misleading rendering, and in R.V. 'hades' is substituted for 'hell' in the New Testament, and in the Old Testament Sheol is nearly always used either in the text or the margin. The American Revisers use Sheol always in the Old Testament and Hades in the New Testament. See Hastings, 'Dictionary of the Bible,' 'Hell.']

The doctrine of Christ's descent into Hades was a late addition to the Creed. It is not in the Nicene Creed; its first appearance is in a creed of Aquileia in A.D. 390. Its only Scriptural evidence is Acts ii. 24–27, 31; 1 S. Pet. iii. 18–22; iv. 6, and possibly Eph. iv. 9, and S. Matt. xxvii. 52, 53 (cf. S. Luke xi. 21, 22): the release of those 'in prison' in Hades is the first sign of the stronger one's victory over the 'strong man.' These passages plainly appear to teach that our Lord at His death underwent the experience of all men, and passed into the abode or condition of departed spirits, and that there He proclaimed the Gospel that He had conquered death and sin so that these departed ones could share in His victory. S. Peter seems to imply that Christ preached to all the dead (νεκροῖς, iv. 6, it seems, must have the same sense as in ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς of ver. 5); but he speaks particularly only of His preaching to those who had refused to listen to the preaching of Noah and were drowned in the flood. This is probably his way of expressing the truth that all men are to

have the opportunity of knowing Christ and His Gospel, if not in this world, then after death ; and that, however much God may punish men in this life, He does not condemn any who are without that knowledge.

We have considered at length in what sense Christ's atoning work can be said to have been 'finished' when He died. We now go on to consider the work of reconciling the world to God which this finished work enabled Him at once to begin, and which has been going on ever since, and is to go till the 'end' of which S. Paul speaks in 1 Cor. xv. 24–28.

He began this work, we are told, immediately after His death, when He descended into Hades and preached His gospel to the dead.[1] For some reason His victory could not be manifested to His disciples on earth till the third day, but it could be made known at once to those in the other world, who were waiting to know of it. The delay on earth was no doubt necessary that His disciples might know that He had really died, and risen from death. But He had conquered death as soon as He died, and therefore could go at once as conqueror to the departed and preach the same gospel to them which His disciples on earth were sent to proclaim after Pentecost. There was the Gospel as soon as Christ's obedience had been perfected, and His human will was completely at one with God's. For, as we said above, God being what He is cannot withhold any gift of life which it is possible for man to receive.

'The dead' to whom He preached must have included all those who had died without knowing there was any hope for them, as well as those who had been taught to expect that a saviour would one day come. But so long as they were without Him, they were 'in prison,' i.e. their wills were powerless to fulfil God's demands: they were in bondage to self-will, from which not death but only the victorious Christ can free men. This is implied in the whole teaching of the New Testament about Christ's Atonement. The Gospel to them was just what it is to us: the good news that because of what Christ has done

[1] 1 S. Pet. iii. 18–20; iv. 6.

and our union with Him we can repent and do God's will. With regard to the apparent impossibility that Christ could have preached to all the dead in 'so short a time,' we must remember that time is no real measure in spiritual intercourse. Just as we can go through years of experience in one moment in a dream, so may Christ's experience with the dead between His death and Resurrection have been such as would have taken hundreds of years in this life.

In the early creeds, this fact of Christ's descent into Hades was included in that of His death. It became explicit afterwards, probably because it was considered to emphasize the reality of His death in face of denials. In the teaching of the New Testament on the subject, we ought to include S. Luke xxiii. 43. Christ probably used the word 'paradise' to make it clear to the robber that after death he would go with Himself into a condition of conscious peace and joy. 'Paradise' is a Persian word, meaning 'garden of delights.' It is only used three times in the New Testament: here, by S. Paul in 2 Cor. xii. 4, and in Rev. ii. 7 (cf. Gen. ii. 8). The reason for this sparing use no doubt was that many fanciful and superstitious ideas were connected with the word. It is applied to the garden of Eden, a condition in the intermediate state, and heaven. This came to be so, because the ideas of joy and peace conveyed by the word are the result of being with God. Eden was to have been a paradise, because man was meant to live with God; when he refused, there was paradise on earth for him no longer. Paradise after death is a description of the condition of those who are with Christ, but heaven is the real and perfect paradise because there the blessed live in perfect union with God.

Acts ii. 24–27, 31 speaks of the reality of Christ's death, that He did truly pass through the experience which awaits us all; but that He being what He is, 'it was not possible that he should be holden of death, either in body or spirit.'

1 S. Pet. iii. 18–22, a very difficult passage. Why does S. Peter particularize those only who were disobedient at the time of the flood? Probably because the flood

was thought of as a first judgment day of the whole world, when God destroyed the race and began again with the eight faithful ones, and therefore as the type of all following judgment days (see S. Matt. xxiv. 37–39). It was sufficient, therefore, to take this great example, and to show that it was not a final but only a temporary judgment, because the men who were disobedient then had never known Christ or His Gospel, in order to show that no one can be considered to have had his real chance until he has known Christ. As Christ is the one saviour, so He is the one and only judge; all judgment is given to Him as Son of man. As no one can know God except through Christ, so no one can reject God till he has known Him in Christ. Since this is so, and God is love, it becomes certain that everyone will be given the knowledge of Christ, if not in this world then in the next, and will be judged only on account of it.

The probable meaning of 1 S. Pet. iv. 6 is that God will not judge any man finally till the whole truth has been revealed to him. (*κριθῶσι . . . ζῶσι*). The difference in tense makes the sense the same as though S. Peter had written *ἵνα κριθέντες ζῶσι*). The Gospel was preached to the dead that, in spite of the fact that judgment had fallen on them after the manner of men in this world, they may live, i.e. have the chance of living, after the manner of God in the spiritual world.

Ephes. iv. 9. This probably refers to the descent into Hades. *τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς* ('the lower parts of the earth') is an almost impossible phrase for describing merely the earth; whereas it would be a good one to describe Hades, which was supposed to be under the earth. Also, since Sheol, the dreary abode of the departed, as it was considered apart from Christ's work, had great need of Christ's light, it is much more in accordance with *v.* 10 to suppose that the descent into Hades is referred to. The whole range of Christ's work would then be included. He who went down to the lowest ascended to the highest.

S. Matt. xxvii. 52, 53. A difficult passage, which is confused and inconsistent with itself. The opening of the tombs and the rising and appearing of these saints are spoken

of as taking place at the same time; and yet, while the opening of the tombs is caused by an earthquake at the time of the crucifixion, the bodies are said to have come out of the tombs after His Resurrection. Again, the word for Resurrection (ἔγερσις) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. Yet there is no textual evidence that the passage is an interpolation, and no reason to doubt that the Evangelist believed this tradition. A possible explanation, given by Dr. Plummer, is that this rising of some of the Old Testament saints was the direct and immediate result of Christ's descent and preaching in Hades, i.e. that they were all ready to accept Christ's glorious Gospel, and did accept it and therefore could be given a share in His risen life. They thus became a proof of Christ's victory over death and Hades.[1] And the writer added the words 'after his Resurrection,' although he was thereby adding confusion to his text, in order to preserve for Christ the glory of being the 'firstfruits of them that are asleep.'[2] He could not imagine the possibility of any rising from the dead before Christ; he took, as all his contemporaries did, the time of the manifestation of Christ's Resurrection—'the third day'—as the actual time of it; and so thought the tradition that the saints appeared on Good Friday to have been wrong in that particular. There appears, however, to be a simpler explanation. Perhaps the two events happened as they are recorded, the breaking open of the tombs by the earthquake on Good Friday, and the appearance of the saints after Easter: and the Evangelist supposed there was a connection between the two events which did not really exist. It was natural that he should do so, for if the saints appeared to people they must have done so in the bodily forms they used to have, or they would not have been recognized; and since it was the common belief in those days that the resurrection of the body meant the rising again of that which had been put in the grave, it was natural to suppose that the bursting open of the tombs was a necessary preliminary to the appearance of the saints in their bodies.

[1] Rev. i. 18. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 20, 23.

We have now reviewed all the Scriptural evidence there is for this subject; and it is evident that, while the results of Christ's victory for us in this life are described very fully, very little indeed is told us about Christ's redeeming work for man which goes on after man's death. We can infer the fact that it does go on; that all men have been or will be given full opportunity for knowing Christ and His Gospel; and that no one will go to 'hell,' in the modern sense of the term, who has not had such opportunity. That is, enough is told us to show that this life is not man's only opportunity for knowing Christ; that Christ's work, and therefore as we may be sure the work of His Church, goes on in the place or state of the departed. But of the conditions under which the work is done there we are told almost nothing. We are left to make inferences from what we know of God's nature and purpose in Christ, and from the work He does in this life. (If the passage in S. Matthew refers to the result of Christ's work in Hades, as is the most natural supposition, then it would lead us to suppose that Christian truth can be far more effectively taught in Hades than on earth, since those 'saints' were so quickly capable of receiving a share in Christ's Resurrection life. But little stress can be laid on this, since we do not know who they were or what their spiritual condition was when Christ went to them.

It is, however, right to take Christ's parable of Dives and Lazarus in connection with this subject. It teaches what we should all have supposed without it, that dying and going to Hades will make a very great difference in the way we look at things, and will make anyone who was desirous of knowing the truth far more capable of receiving and recognizing it, when it is preached to him. Though our characters will be what we have made them in this life, yet hosts of prejudices will certainly fall from us, and we shall see the relative value of many things better, e.g. the folly of spending ourselves in trying to get things in this world, as Dives, whose experiences in Hades had taught him so much that he thought his brethren would certainly listen and allow their eyes to be opened 'if one went unto

them from the dead.' The fact that he, who before his death had greatly enjoyed life, in Hades was in torment, shows very plainly the effect of the change of circumstances produced by death. The torments arose from his own mind, we may be certain, and the parabolic dialogue is meant to teach us, no doubt, that he saw the awful vanity now of what had been 'his good things' on earth; longed to make up for his selfish life; craved for any relief from this terrible agony of knowing that he had wasted his life and all its opportunities, agony which was perhaps increased by the reflection that now he had left his wealth to his brethren who did not need it, instead of to the poor who did; that he longed that Lazarus, i.e. someone in want, might be sent, that he might be able to minister to him and so relieve a little his awful torment. 'Send Lazarus' seems to show that his torments were chiefly caused by remorse for his past selfishness. And all the time he knew that now he could not have again the opportunities he had lost for becoming a good man; that he was so far gone in selfishness that he had no power to become good; 'there was a great gulf fixed' between him and the good characters. Imagine then the effect of Christ's coming into Hades with His gospel to a man in that state: the gospel being that there is now power in man to conquer all selfishness,—that it has all been conquered by man, and that this victorious power is offered to him, Dives, as to the rest to fight and conquer with.

He was the type of those rich, selfish men who trust in riches and can no more get into the kingdom of God than a camel can go through a needle's eye, and so far as mere human power goes cannot be saved. But God has made even this possible; what fallen man could not do, 'what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh,' God sending His Son has accomplished. The power now available for man is all-prevailing. This is the glorious gospel which Christ preached to the dead! Think how Dives would have leaped at it, and would gladly have endured any pain and struggle, if at last his character could become loving and he could get quite free from those

awful chains which bound him to himself. From this parable, taken in connection with our Lord's descent into Hades, we can gather a great deal as to what is probably going on in Hades now,—the wonderful work that Christ is doing amid surroundings vastly more favourable than these on earth. But all this belongs more to the doctrine of the Catholic Church, to be considered hereafter.

Now we need no longer think of death as implying a 'descent' into Hades; that was the old idea which Christ has dispelled. We can consider that it means rather an ascent into a region where Christ's truth can be seen far more plainly than it is here; where all the good will therefore very rapidly become better and more loving; and where all the bad will have wonderful chances of knowing Christ that were not possible to them here, which perhaps if they could have had they would not have been as bad as they were. We can therefore gain from the recitation of this clause in the Creed fresh hope and brightness day by day about the prospects of Christ's kingdom, about the way it is 'coming' in the other world.

But we can be sure that the teaching about Christ's work in the other world is so very slight, because God wants to teach us not merely to wait for something better in the next world, but to believe that we are sharers in Christ's risen and ascended life here and now, and that all our energies are to be concentrated on using it to the very best of our power amid the opportunities in this life, for the spreading of His kingdom.

Further, it must be borne in mind that the teaching of the parable we have been thinking of is in itself very terrible for all who live for themselves. Death brought to Dives the change from a condition in which he was thought well of, and had a very enjoyable life, to one in which he was in great agony of mind and knew himself to be a despicable and selfish monstrosity, between whom and all good people there was a 'great gulf fixed,' so that he could not be in any union with them. Let us take an extreme modern example of Dives, that we may realize what the parable means for us all. Think of a man who has made a vast sum of money

by ' grinding the faces of the poor '—by ' sweating ' them ; or one who is trying to make his fortune dishonestly through this war, which is causing people on all sides of him to sacrifice themselves. He may pass here as an honourable man, and may mix freely with good people as though he was one with them. When he dies he will have a big funeral, and people will perhaps make speeches about his goodness and charity ! But he will be in torment : the mists of this life will have rolled away, and he will know himself to be an unspeakable scoundrel, worse probably than most murderers—a self-made outcast between whom and all good men and women there can be no fellowship whatever. The Gospel of Christ will undoubtedly be preached to him, for God must long for him and his salvation always. But the question is, will he be able to embrace it ; will he have any power left to see goodness or love as they are ? while there is no question at all about the fact that, in any case, his agony will be far more awful than anything we have ever seen or imagined in this life.

The Resurrection

The Resurrection of Christ.—'The third day he rose again from the dead' (Apostles' Creed).

'And the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures' (Nicene Creed).

'Rose again the third day from the dead' (Athanasian Creed).

1. The Resurrection of Christ means that after His death on the Cross His whole human nature was filled to its utmost capacity in body, soul, and spirit with the divine life, and so raised at once and for ever above all that has ever prevented man from being one with God (Rom. vi. 9, 10; Rev. i. 17, 18).

The Resurrection of His body was but the outward and visible sign of the perfect resurrection of His whole human nature above the power of sin, temptation, and physical and spiritual death.

THE full meaning of Christ's Resurrection is frequently lost sight of. Attention has in most ages been too much concentrated on the outward, obvious part of it—the resurrection of the body. It was this, of course, which enabled the first disciples to understand that Christ had risen; and the wonder of it, along with the certainty it brought them, that man can pass through death and emerge alive on the other side, was so absorbing that it was not surprising that their thought, or that Christian thought since, should have dwelt on this too exclusively, with the result that the truth of what Christ's Resurrection really is was to a large extent obscured.

It is good to dwell on this a little. Consider the dread of death which has always prevailed and still does prevail in the human race, and the awful uncertainty as to whether it is, as it seems to be, the end of us or not. Even in the Jewish race there was great uncertainty. There was much belief in a national resurrection; e.g. Ezek. xxxvii.; and frequently in Ezekiel and Hosea a figurative resurrection

is spoken of—the recovery of the national life. But for individuals there were only occasional expressions of hope in the Old Testament[1]: as a rule the writers are pessimistic if not hopeless[2] in Psalms vi. 5; xxx. 9; Isa. xxxviii. 10–18, &c. By our Lord's time one whole section of the Jews, the Sadducees, did not believe in any resurrection, while those who did chiefly conceived of life after death as a dreary sojourn in the darkness of Sheol. Think, then, how glorious Christ's revelation must have been, which made His disciples sure that death had been and therefore would be conquered—physical death. And how all-absorbing!

Think, too, of the force this revelation has for most Christians now as in previous ages. The thought and horror of death is forced upon them constantly. And belief in Christ gives them the certainty that death is not the end. We lay Christian bodies in the grave in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ.'[3] But how easy it is to let that resurrection mean for us chiefly the resurrection of the body from physical death, which gives us the hope merely that we shall survive death. How easy to let this blind us to the great truth that Christ's Resurrection was also a rising for us above spiritual death and all that tends to it, and that the gospel it brings is the good news that therefore we can all rise in the same spiritual way *now* and for ever. Just as physical death is but the outward sign and therefore a very small part of the spiritual death which causes it, so resurrection from physical death is but the outward sign and therefore a very small part of the spiritual resurrection of man's nature above all which causes or tends towards spiritual death.

In the New Testament great stress is laid on Christ's physical resurrection, and the evidence for it is carefully set forth, because it was this which enabled the disciples to believe in the other. Apart from this, they would not

[1] E.g. Psalms xvi., xvii.

[2] E.g. Job x. 20–22; Ps. vi. 5; xxx. 9; lxxxviii. 10–12; Isa. xxxviii 10–18; Eccles. ix. 10.

[3] Burial Service in Prayer Book.

have known that He had risen at all; that He was with them. They would have thought that He had gone; that there was no possibility of any further communion between them and Him. It was therefore essential that they should be made to know that He was alive and with them. Knowing this and holding communion with Him, they would gradually come to know, by experience of the results of this communion, what His Resurrection really meant.

But the evidence we have now is mostly of quite another kind. We ought, therefore, to hold an entirely spiritual conception of the Resurrection, and to consider the future resurrection of the body as merely a necessary outcome of the glorious resurrection which is ours in spirit now. We ought to understand the truth as S. Paul expressed it, e.g. in Rom. viii. 9–11.

It is chiefly for this reason that I have begun by stating the full meaning of Christ's Resurrection, which was only gradually revealed to the minds and hearts of the first disciples, before considering, as we must proceed to do, the actual story of the Resurrection as it is contained in the Gospels.

This Resurrection was the necessary result of His human obedience to God's will, which culminated and was perfected on the Cross. (Phil. ii. 8–10; Heb. ii. 9; cf. S. John x. 17; Isa. liii. 10–12.) For this made it at last possible for God to fulfil His will in man, the purpose for which He had originally created him in His own image. When once Christ's human will was perfected in obedience, God, who is love, who eternally gives Himself wholly to His Son, must fill that Son's human nature also with Himself.

We have dwelt on this at length before. It is only necessary to remind you now of what we know of love: that is, that one who truly loves longs to communicate as much as possible of his goods and of his own self to those whom he loves. This enables us to understand Phil. ii. 8–10, the great passage in which S. Paul sweeps through all creation and shows Christ as Lord everywhere and over all. There can be no limit to the communication

of God's life to Christ; it must extend to all who are, or ever can be, united to Christ, and all men can be because He is man as they are.

Thus the Resurrection of Christ is the fact upon which the whole Christian gospel rests. (1 Cor. xv. 14, 17, 20–22, 45; S. John xi. 25, 26; xiv. 19; Acts i. 8, 22; iv. 2, 33; xvii. 18, 31; Rom. i. 3, 4; iv. 24, 25; vi. 9–11; x. 9; Phil. iii. 8–11; 1 S. Pet. i. 3; iii. 21; Col. i. 18–20; cf. S. Matt. xxviii. 18.) For by it the truth was proclaimed that the Man Christ Jesus is the divine Son of God; that the sacrifice He had offered for man had been accepted as all-sufficient, i.e. that man in and through Him had overcome all that had prevented Him from living in union with God, and therefore did now actually share in the uninterrupted communication of eternal life which is from the Father to the Son in the Blessed Trinity; and therefore that his Resurrection contains the possibility and promise that all those who share in His human nature shall share in and at last be filled with His risen and glorified life.

[*Notes.*—Rom. i. 3, 4. 'This gospel which S. Paul is commissioned to proclaim relates to God's own Son, whom it presents in a twofold aspect, (1) as son of man, who traces his lineage from David, and (2) in virtue of the holiness inherent in His (human) spirit, visibly declared to be Son of God by the Resurrection.' Thus the Resurrection proclaimed that man had overcome all that had hindered union with God, and had been raised to share in the eternal union of the Son of God with the Father in the Trinity. (Cf. S. John xvii. 4, 5.)

Rom. iv. 25.—'For our justification,' to accomplish it, i.e. that we might be justified through faith in Him that quickeneth the dead, as Abraham was (cf. *v.* 17 with *v.* 24). More than this, the Resurrection is itself the source of justification and life (v. 18; vi. 5–11; Eph. ii. 5–6; Col. ii. 13). On the Cross our Lord gave Himself for us; through the Resurrection He gave Himself to us (Pusey).

Rom. vi. 9–11.—Christ was raised for ever above death and all that caused it. He died unto sin once for all. This sin was ours, and its pressure upon Him culminated in His death (as we have thought), and therefore His Resurrection or victory over death meant and showed

that He had risen above it all and was its conqueror. (Cf. 1 S. Pet. iii. 18 ; Heb. ix. 12, 26, 28.) Christ lives henceforth for God. No other power *κυριεύει αὐτοῦ* but God.

1 Cor. xv. 14, 17.—The gospel was a message about the risen Christ ; apart from Him risen the apostles had nothing to offer. And the Resurrection is the proof of the atoning value of His death : apart from it there would have been nothing to show that He who dies was more than man, or that His death had any peculiar efficacy for men ; no proof that forgiveness had been won—we should be yet in our sins.

1 Cor. xv. 20–23.—Because the Resurrection had shown who and what Christ is, it contains the promise of the resurrection of all men. Compare S. John xi. 25 ; xiv. 19. Because of Christ's relation to God and man, He is the resurrection and life of all men. See also 1 Cor. xv. 45.

Col. i. 18–20.—He, the first-fruits from the dead, is the head of the Church, because ' all the fulness ' of God and man dwells in Him. He is, therefore, able to bring all men into union with God. (Cf. Eph. i. 15–23.)

Hence the gospel preached by the apostles was that of the Resurrection ; the witness they gave was to the Resurrection. (Acts i. 8, 22 ; iv. 2, 33 ; xvii. 18, 31.)

1 S. Pet. i. 3–5.—Christ's Resurrection gives to us who share in His human nature the hope of a share in His incorruptible resurrection life. This hope is to help us through our present trial.]

The references show that the Christian gospel is one of resurrection. It is the good news that Christ has risen, and that therefore the whole race of which He is the head can rise. Above what ? Above all that has ever prevented or does still prevent men's union with God. Physical death is the least part of this. Bodily sickness, decay, death prevent the life of God from entering into and filling one part of man's being : but the least important part of him. Spiritual sickness, decay, death—these are the great enemies, of which the physical counterparts are only the outward signs. We all know that it is spiritual not physical sickness which hinders us from living in union

with God. The gospel is, then, that Christ has conquered it all, and that He Who is head of our race is also the eternal Son of God—a source therefore of infinite life and power to us all. We need some power to enable us to rise above all that drags us down from God. The risen Christ is this power. A mere physical resurrection, the indefinite prolongation of our life, would not be good, unless the life that was in us was good. The life that is to fill us all is Christ's life—the risen life. If this were not so, there would be no Christian gospel.

Probably it is chiefly the failure to realize what Christ's Resurrection was and what kind of resurrection we all need, that has made Christian theology often dwell so exclusively on the Cross as the means of our atonement, as though Christ had merely done something instead of us, and was not also the everlasting source of new life to us—Christ in us the hope of glory[1]—the hope of winning our own complete victory over all spiritual disease and death and so of gaining our share in God's life for ever. Man is so slack and selfish that he will jump at any message which tells him that all has been done for him, and that he has nothing to do but to believe this.

We need never dwell on sickness and death, physical or spiritual, apart from the Resurrection. All the sin, decay, sickness, sorrow, death in the world is only to be considered as material for the victory of Christ. Thus the charge Christ gave to His first disciples, and gives to them all in all ages, is to proclaim and be in their lives witnesses of His Resurrection, i.e. that the true life of man is Christ's risen life, which has triumphed over all that is evil, and is in perfect communion with God.

The meaning and power of Christ's Resurrection was made known more fully afterwards by His Ascension, by the outpouring of the Spirit of Pentecost, and by the history of the Church ever since. The evidence for it goes on accumulating. But the Resurrection itself proclaimed the truth that He had once for all gained for man a complete victory and eternal life. All that has been

[1] Col. i. 27, 28.

manifested since of His glory and victory has followed in consequence of His Resurrection.

The gospel of the Resurrection may be said to be summed up in S. Matt. xxviii. 18, 19. Everything that happens is to be referred to it : all that is good as the direct result of it ; all that is bad as material for the manifestation of Christ's all-embracing authority. What we see of Christ's victories over sinners, ourselves and others, become in the light of this gospel merely first-fruits of the complete harvest.

We Christians must never, therefore, allow ourselves to be overcome by evil, either our own temptations, or the wickedness of the world. For we belong to Him Whose authority is supreme over all and Who is with us all the days.

' All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth.' Consider the range of this claim ! S. Paul almost exhausts language in trying to describe the glory and power which the Father bestowed on Christ when He raised Him from the dead.[1] He is but showing the content of Christ's claim. Christ is Lord of all in heaven and upon earth, and His dominion is exercised in and through human nature. As Jesus, the head of our race, He reigns over all. This is the part of the truth He enables us to grasp. Hence the universal commission to His disciples. They are to exercise His power for the whole human race, and are not to rest till all have been made disciples. Then He proceeds to explain what becoming a disciple really involves : nothing less than entering into vital relationship with the Blessed Trinity ! To be baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is to be immersed in the ocean of the divine love, or, as we said above, to be given a share in the love which the Son eternally gives the Father and receives from the Father.

The Outward Signs.—**The accounts in the Gospels of ' the great forty days ' contain the record of the outward signs, through which our Lord enabled His first disciples to believe in His Resur-**

[1] Eph. i. 20–23 ; Col. i. 18–20 ; Phil. ii. 9–11.

rection and to understand something of their own relation to Him in His risen and glorified life.

These signs were suited to the condition of their minds then, and were no doubt so necessary that the truth of the Resurrection could not have been established in their minds without them.

But the outward signs themselves are not of the essence of Christ's Resurrection and might conceivably have been of quite another kind, if this revelation had been first given to a later age ; e.g. the empty tomb was probably so necessary as a sign to the first disciples that they would not have been able to believe without it that Christ was really risen : but if the revelation had been given first in our age, we should probably not have required such a sign at all. The outward signs are not necessary to us as they were to Christ's first disciples. It can even be said that the evidence for Christ's Resurrection which we possess now, which is gained through the history and experience of His Church, might have been equally strong if no record of the great forty days had come down to us.

The evidence that the facts, which are recorded in the Gospels in their history of the forty days, did actually occur as stated, is overwhelmingly strong. And the teaching contained in the stories is of very great value for all generations. Yet it is always possible, for those whose mental presuppositions are contrary to it, to reject such evidence as insufficient. And indeed no such documentary evidence, however strong, can be sufficient of itself to produce faith in the risen Lord, since such faith far transcends, while it includes, the mere assent of our understanding to the truth of past facts of His life.

Hence the modern criticism of the Gospel stories of the Resurrection is of great value to our generation, in that it helps us to fix our minds on the signs of His presence which our Lord gives us now (rather than on those which He gave His disciples at the first), and so draws us into closer communion with our Saviour, the Living One, Who is the ever-present source of new life to the whole world, and Who can and will manifest Himself more clearly day by day to those whose minds and hearts are given to Him.

We have tried to summarize the gospel of the Resurrection—to get a general idea of what Christ's Resurrection means to man. Now we proceed to consider the outward signs, through which our Lord began to teach His disciples

what His Resurrection meant, and by which He enabled them to become sharers in His glorified life. The task which He began, as soon as He had gained the fulness of the divine life in His own humanity, was that of bringing the whole human race to partake of this divine life. This work He has been doing ever since His Resurrection. The record of the forty days of Easter shows how He began to do it. The history of the Church ever since Pentecost shows how He has been proceeding step by step towards the accomplishment of His task—τὸ τέλος ('the end'). Cf. 1 Cor. xv. 24–28.

To use another metaphor—from S. Paul—we are watching the gradual building, storey by storey, of the vast temple of God, which is at last to consist of the whole human race—living stones built up into the great Temple, which God fills with His life and in which He is to live for ever.[1] The record of the forty days does not take us beyond the foundation work of this Temple. The history of the Church since Pentecost till to-day shows how our Lord has been building on that foundation. This record of the forty days is unspeakably precious, as showing how our Lord works; but, even supposing that no record had come down of the way in which Christ laid the foundations, we should still be able to see how the Architect and Builder is working now towards the complete structure.

The modern criticism of the Gospel stories of the Resurrection, which shows plainly that the stories of themselves are not sufficient to produce faith in the Resurrection to-day, has led and is leading Christian theologians to realize that the work by which our Lord laid the foundations of His work is not of the same kind as that by which He raises gradually the superstructure. What was necessary then is not of the same necessity now; the signs He gave then are superseded by the signs He gives now of His presence. And further, it is leading them to realize the very great distinction between 'believing in the Resurrection' and 'believing in the risen Lord.'

Hence we are coming to think that we need not demand

[1] Eph. ii. 19–22; cf. 1 Pet. ii. 3–5.

of men, under pain of excommunication, that they believe that the Resurrection took place in any particular way; that there are other and far better ways of evoking their belief in Christ; that we have to raise their minds and hearts, as well as our own, to Jesus alive and with us now, so that they with us may be able to recognize the manifold signs of His presence and power and love which He gives now. There is much reason to suppose that this is in accordance with our Lord's own method of evoking.

It is not that there is any reason why we should doubt the truth of these stories of the Gospel. For those who believe in Him and know and live with Him, they are entirely credible, *far* more so than any other explanations which have been given of the way in which the faith of the Church began. But for those who have not yet faith in Christ, the evidence of the stories themselves at this distance of time is not sufficient. Therefore, we need to realize how Christ is working now at the building of His spiritual Temple; what means He is adopting of evoking men's faith, so that they become capable of receiving His life; how He is leading them and us on ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν ('from faith unto faith'). There is much for us to do. He wants us to reach out; to make ventures; to explore the depths of His love, and to help others to do the same, that we may share ever more completely in the life which He now lives in heaven.

Let us consider more fully, then, what that faith is which Christ is trying to evoke from us ever more and more, for to understand this is to understand and so be able to co-operate with the work of bringing men to God, which Christ began at His Resurrection and has been carrying on ever since. For this purpose it seems worth while to enter now upon a long digression from our subject.

What is the faith which enables us to say with truth the 'I believe' of the Christian Creed? S. Paul calls it πίστις Χριστοῦ (faith in, or of Christ), which

includes *πίστις ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι* (faith in His blood).[1] (The faith of which the nature and power are described in Heb. xi. is the same virtue of faith which had not as yet had its highest exercise because it was not faith *εἰς Χριστόν*, faith 'in' or 'on' God, known as Christ.) We say not merely 'I believe that there is a God, the Father . . . the Son . . . and Holy Ghost,' or 'I believe that God did certain things.' The belief we profess includes these but goes far beyond them, and is trust *in God*, the personal Being, who has done such and such things. This is the highest kind of faith, which includes all lower kinds and is the only kind we need think of now.

What is it? It can no more be defined for the benefit of those who do not possess it than love can. But it can be described so that those who have it recognize the description as true, and are thus enabled to understand what their experience is and to help others to higher faith.

It is an attitude of man towards God of a certain kind, i.e. the attitude or temper of a son to a divine Father. And it is an attitude which always involves a venture—a leap of man's spirit towards a fuller realization than he has yet had of the relation of his Father to him, and therefore of his own relation to his Father. It is possible for man, because of the truth that he *is* a son of God, and God wants him to know it and to live as a son, and therefore has endowed him with the necessary faculties for doing so. It has therefore always been possible for all men, because they are all sons of God through His creation and perpetual preservation of them. But it is possible in an altogether higher sense for those who have been given a share in the life of sonship to which Jesus was exalted. This realization of his sonship was a gradually increasing one with S. Paul, in response to his repeated ventures.[2] The result of his faith was *the certainty* of his

[1] Rom. iii. 22, 25. Cf. Gal. ii. 16, where *πίστις Χριστοῦ* is shown to mean believing *εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν*.

[2] E.g. Phil. iii. 12–14.

union with Christ, of the fact indeed that Christ was his life.[1]

Let us never think of faith as something with which we have to be content because we have not knowledge. It is the witness of the Christian saints in all ages that faith indeed brings certainty; but if the inquirer asks what kind of certainty in comparison with that which the senses bring, for example, we cannot explain to him, if he has not experienced it. Yet it is the chief means by which we get the surest knowledge of people even on earth, with whom we are in visible contact. How have we ever come to know what our friends are to us, but by making ventures of faith, by putting them to the proof? Faith gives us a far higher certainty of what our friends are, and are to us, than sight or hearing or any bodily contact does.

These descriptions of faith in Christ and its results we recognize as true, because of our own experience. Think what your knowledge of Christ is, and how you have gained it. Whatever may have been the steps by which Christ has evoked your faith, you have given it again and again, with the result already that Christ is so much to you that you cannot imagine life without Him. You have known His power and love in innumerable times of temptation, sorrow and joy. You have felt His presence with you for years, have felt Him lifting you up—often dragging you up almost against your will—into higher ways of loving. And you are conscious now that He is calling you to make more ventures—to prove Him more fully—to believe that He can raise you still higher, give you far more of the power of love He has, wherewith to spread His kingdom in India. And remember that it is because you know all this that you can be effectual witnesses of Christ to the people of India. Compared with this, it is of almost no importance that you should be able to prove from the Bible that Christ rose from the dead.

Let us consider *the relation of this faith in Christ to*

[1] Rom. viii. 14–17; Gal. ii. 20; iv. 4–7; Phil. i. 21; iii. 7–9. Cf. 1 S. John iii. 1, 2.

love and works. Such faith must work through love. It is impossible for us to experience the truth of our union with God in Christ without loving Him. A great deal of faith can exist without love, but not this highest kind. And it must produce such love as will make us long to do our best for God and for our fellows, that they too may have this fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ.[1] When once we have arrived at this highest faith, the problems concerning its relation to love and works are solved—its relation, for faith is not the same as love, as some imply : it is quite a distinct virtue, though in its highest exercise it must result in love, which in return impels us to make more ventures of faith.

There remains the problem of *the relation of faith in Christ to reason.* It is very important to get clear about this if we can, that we may understand our Lord's method of revealing Himself to ourselves and others. Mistakes about it arise chiefly from considering man's being as if it were a collection of separate compartments ; e.g. as if he did a certain amount of work by reason, and a certain other and higher kind by faith, so that if it is a question of sacrificing one or the other, we had better sacrifice reason as the less important. But man is not so constituted. His different powers are meant to work in concert, and there ought to be no question of ' sacrificing ' any of them, but of using them all to the full. (If we are bidden to restrain any of our powers from certain exercises, it is only that they may have higher ones.) For example, man is always a reasonable being in whatever he does or purposes to do. But he reasons rightly or wrongly, more or less perfectly, according to the kind of man he is. Again, his reason has a wider or more restricted realm in which to work, according as he does or does not use the faculties he has for attaining to life in higher realms of truth. Also, his reason attains a higher quality or character, when the man has access to and actually lives in these higher realms.

This must be considered and illustrated.

[1] 1 S. John i. 1–4; and cf. S. James ii. 17–26 with e.g. Col. i. 24–29.

Let us try to describe reason, not however according to its complicated processes, but in relation to its meaning and purpose : as one might describe an engine, not according to its complicated works, but in relation to its purpose, e.g. that it is a machine for making the wheels or screw of a steamer revolve, and so for propelling the steamer.

Reason may be described as the power, or machine, by which (1) we recognize *truth* as *true*, and (2) we advance from this perception to the perception of further truth by inference. The two are in combination, and therefore reason can be described as the faculty by which persons get insight into truth, i.e. see it as true. It is meant to be exercised on all truth to which it is possible for man to attain ; and it will have its supreme exercise when we see God as He is.[1] The amount of truth on which our reason can be exercised on earth depends on many things, for which it is not responsible, e.g. our birth, surroundings, education, temperament. But amid all the differences among men, it is only necessary for our purpose to distinguish three different kinds or realms of truth, to which men in general have access, and the three different qualities or characters which reason has, when it is at work in these different realms.

(*a*) The realm of truth which can be attained to by the intellectual faculty acting alone, so far as that is possible. This is described by S. Paul as ' the wisdom of this world.' [2] Our intellect can never act alone really, for it is the intellect of a man ; yet it is possible for men, by exercising their minds constantly on certain classes of facts to the exclusion of others, to become almost like mere human calculating machines. Darwin seems to have thought of himself almost as something of this sort in his later years.

The reason of a man who lived habitually in this realm would be that of the intellectual faculty only. All the truths of the higher realms would be shut to it ; and though his reason might be so powerful in this realm that he would be known as a great man, yet a child might be greater in knowledge than he, and the child's reason of an altogether

[1] 1 S. John iii. 2. [2] 1 Cor. i. 20–25 ; iii. 18, 19.

higher quality. A genius, for example, to whom right and wrong were almost meaningless, would remain in the lowest realm, however powerful his intellect, and his reason would be of the lowest quality.

(*b*) The realm of truth, to which exercise of the moral consciousness gives access—the realm of persons, concerned with questions of right and wrong. This is an altogether higher region than the other, and the reason of a man who lived merely in the lowest region would be of no use here. But suppose that man to have his conscience so touched that he passed into this higher region, then his reason would become of a different character, because he, the man, had become of a different character. It would have higher powers. The man's life would not be less rational than before, but his rational life would now be a far bigger, wider one.

(*c*) The spiritual realm, to which the highest kind of faith gives access. This is incomparably higher and vaster than (*a*) and (*b*). When a man gets into this region, *he* —the same rational person he was before—gets there: he does not leave his reason behind. He needs it more than ever, for he is now in a kingdom where new and wonderful truths are before him, to be investigated. And because he has now become a more spiritual man, his reason has a new character: it becomes capable of dealing with spiritual truths about God's own nature, and His relation to His creatures—wonderful truths, which only the reason of a spiritual person can gain insight into. In this region there is a constant succession of new experiences to be examined, from which new truths still are to be discovered by inference. The man who lives here—in this exalted atmosphere—is doing nothing less than exploring the depths of God's love. For this he needs reason refined and developed, though reason alone could never have got him into this realm, nor could it deal with the truths in it, unless the man himself were in an exalted, spiritual condition—unless he had come to know God by faith. For example, the realities represented by atonement, forgiveness, regeneration, the presence of the Holy Ghost in us, the Eucharist,

&c., are altogether beyond the reach of the reason of the merely intellectual man. It is as futile to submit them to it, as it would be to try to analyse them by the help of a microscope. Yet they all are rational through and through. But it requires the highest quality of reason to deal with them, i.e. the reason of one who is living a spiritual life with God, through faith.

Hence, what man requires for gaining insight into the highest truth—for knowing God and His ways—is not that his reason should be disregarded or 'sacrificed,' but something which may induce him to make the venture of faith through which he may ascend into the high regions.

See how S. Paul acts on this truth in his dealings with the intellectual Corinthians.

1 Cor. i. 17–31, especially verses 21–24.

v. 21. The wisdom of the world is not sufficient for knowing God. Hence God did what He could to evoke man's faith, i.e. to induce him to make those ventures by which alone he could attain to communion with Christ.

vv. 22–24. Both Jews and Greeks seek something which may convince their intellect, but we preach the supreme manifestation of God's love, which, if the preaching goes home, induces men to leap towards Christ in their spirits, and to find Him both the power and the wisdom of God.

1 Cor. iii. 18–20. If any man thinks he is wise, because he has the wisdom of this world, the one thing needful for him is that which will bring him to acknowledge that, with respect to the things most worth knowing, he is a mere fool; and this that he may rise to know them.

There is, however, no depreciation of intellectual processes or attainments, so long as the reason is spiritually informed. See—

1 Cor. ii. 1–16 (*v.* 14, 'interpreting spiritual things to spiritual men,' R.V., margin). All the wonderful things, which God hath prepared for them that love Him, are things upon which reason is to be exercised: but it must be the reason of the spiritual man; the reason of the psychic man is not sufficient—it cannot discern them. The necessary thing, therefore, is that the man should

become spiritual by living with God. This he can do through this highest faith, which worketh through love. When he does this, then he has the mind of Christ : he can reason as Christ does.

We can now describe shortly the relation between faith and reason. Faith is that power by which we can make ventures, and thus gain the certainty of some part of what is involved in our union with God through Christ—realize some of the results of our sonship. Then the truths thus revealed are at once seized upon by our reason, which sees them as true and at once makes inferences from them. These inferences become to us reasons for making further ventures of faith, through which we gain further certainties, upon which reason acts in like manner and with like results. Thus faith and reason work in concert, each helping on the other, if we are in a healthy condition : faith always going ahead and making the ventures, reason following up. Hence '*credo ut intelligam.*'

If, e.g., we who believe in Christ read such a passage as Eph. i.–iii., what vast vistas the words open before our minds—what abundant reasons for making more ventures ! They do this because of our own experience of what the love of Christ is. I have reminded you that Christ has already led you to such a state of certainty as to His union with you and your union with the Father through Him, that it is the most certain thing in your lives. Then let your reason have full play on this certainty. What does it enable you to 'see' ? Among other things, that Jesus has won you thus in spite of great and prolonged opposition on your part. He had to wait very long for you, to win you gradually ; and He always waited with untiring patience. He has been and is everything to you. No lover could plead with you for love as He does. What inferences can you make from this ? That there is no limit to His love, to His patience with you, to His power to enable you to be holy ; no limit, therefore, to His love and patience with others.

God is always stimulating and inspiring us by His Spirit to give our faculties their highest use, and particularly that

we may constantly make more ventures of faith. This is the main thing necessary. He is always, in effect, saying to us, 'This is what I have done, as you know. Will you not trust me that I am able and willing to do this further thing?' 'Do you believe that I am able to do this for you—for others?'

This long discussion about faith ought to enable us to understand more clearly the method on which our Lord began to work for men after His Resurrection, and on which He has continued to work ever since. As soon as He, as man, had become perfectly Son of God, He began to induce men to exercise that faith by which they would be able to realize and live the life of sonship, which He by His atoning work had made possible for all men, and which is nothing less than sharing in the Divine Sonship which is His eternally.

We can proceed now to the Gospel stories, which tell of the beginning of this work.

The Evangelist's History of the great Forty Days in detail.—In this review of the history we are not concerned to show that the Gospel records are sufficient to prove the truth of the Resurrection (see pp. 254–9). That is sufficiently proved for us by the fact that the risen Christ has been with His Church ever since it began and is with us now. But we who know Christ by faith go back to the history of His ministry, that we may learn more about what He is and how He works. (Each time we study the stories afresh, we learn something more of what His love is and does, and so are stimulated to make fresh ventures of faith in Him.)

That this is the way the record is meant to be used is obvious from the stories themselves.

(1) The Gospels show that Christ's revelation of Himself after His Resurrection was not meant to convince the world of the truth of His Resurrection—still less then can the records of it have been meant for that—for He only appeared to those who already knew, believed in and loved Him. The world was to be convinced gradually

afterwards, not directly by Himself, but through His disciples.

(2) The record is very fragmentary. Of the forty days during which our Lord was with His disciples, the events of only five or six days are recorded. The meeting with His mother, His appearance to S. Peter and to S. James[1] are not mentioned. And in the meetings which are recorded, all that was most convincing to the disciples could only be indicated, not told. Of all the things He spake concerning the kingdom of God, almost nothing is told us.

(3) Our Lord revealed Himself, it seems, according to the need and the capacity of those who received the revelation. This we shall dwell on as we proceed.

Hence we must conclude that the record of the forty days is not meant to be a complete history, nor a proof of the Resurrection to those who do not believe in Christ, but a gospel for those who do. Hence it frequently fails to satisfy those who use it as it is not meant to be used, but it satisfies those who use it as a gospel, as we proceed to do now, a gospel in which our Lord showed that He Who was the same being as before death was raised to a new state of life in His human nature, and consequently by that the whole race was raised potentially into the same new life.

The Condition of Christ's Disciples after His Death.—The Evangelists' history of the great forty days shows the condition of Christ's disciples, before they knew of the Resurrection, to have been one of sadness, hopelessness, and fear, which was unrelieved by any expectation of seeing their Master again in this world.

The mental condition of the women disciples is described, or implied, in S. Mark xvi. 1–8 ; S. Luke xxiv. 1–10 ; S. John xx. 1, 2, 11–13 ; that of the Apostles in S. Luke xxiv. 11, 36–41 ; cf. [S. Mark] xvi. 9–14 ; S. John xx. 1–9, 19, 24, 25 ; of other disciples in S. Luke xxiv. 13–25.

The only people who are said to have even remembered Christ's words about His Resurrection were the Pharisees (S. Matt. xxvii.

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 5, 7.

62–64). The disciples had to be reminded of them by an angel, or by our Lord Himself (S. Luke xxiv. 6, 7, 44).

The women expected nothing but to find His dead body in the tomb on Easter Day. When Mary Magdalene found that it was not there, she could only suppose that someone had taken it. The Apostles would not even believe the women or Mary Magdalene, when they said they had seen the Lord. They were hopeless and very fearful; and even when Christ appeared to them He had much difficulty in making them believe that it was really He. He upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart. There is not one word in the record to show that any single disciple expected the Resurrection or even thought it possible. Hence the fact that many people have supposed that the disciples imagined the appearances recorded, because their minds were so full of the thought of the Resurrection, shows how little value such records of the past are in themselves as proofs of what happened.

We can partly imagine the state of mind of the disciples. All their hopes of 'the kingdom' had been shattered by Christ's death; and they must have realized now for the first time how high those hopes had been. They were in danger from the Jews, and still full of the terrible fear which had caused them to forsake their Master in the hour of His utmost need. But, far worse than all, they had lost Him, and must have begun to realize what this meant to them. They had been in a condition of the closest friendship with Incarnate God, the Perfect Love (though they had not realized that this was the case). Who can imagine what the loss of that friendship was to them! Though their minds had not been very receptive, their hearts had. And therefore He had been able to reveal to them mysteries of the kingdom of God, which means that He had imparted Himself to them. Hence their lives had become so bound up with His that they must have felt now that life was nothing without Him.

He had shown them something of His power over 'nature,' and had sometimes made them instruments of

it. They had been used to rely on Him entirely in all great emergencies. (This, which would have been a source of weakness to them if He had been anyone else, was to be in fact the source of their greatest strength.) Therefore now they felt altogether lost—bereft of power—hopeless.

He had also filled and satisfied their hearts by His entrance into them; and now that He had gone, their *hearts were empty*. This is, as we know, the worst kind of void that we can have. They were so hopeless that they could not even remember the teaching He had given about His rising—could see no light. Hence they could not believe what the women said. It was impossible: their hearts told them only that He had gone.

It was no doubt necessary for the people on whom our Lord was to build His Church to learn, through this awful experience, that the absence of Christ meant the withdrawal of all power, and of all that can satisfy the heart. Having had such experience, they would be able to realize the force of the assurance which was to come, 'Lo! I am with you all the days, even unto the consummation of the age.'

The Empty Tomb.—The beginning of our Lord's revelation of Himself to His disciples as their risen Lord was the manifestation of the empty tomb. (S. Mark xvi. 1–6; S. Matt. xxviii. 1–6; S. Luke xxiv. 1–7; S. John xx. 1–9.)

The primary purpose of this was probably to prepare the disciples for the revelations that were to come, by startling them out of their despair and inclining their minds towards the possibility of new and wonderful revelations. Afterwards, when they had seen the risen Lord, it enabled them to realize, what perhaps they could not have realized at all without it (for see, e.g. Dan. xii. 2; 2 Macc. *passim*; S. John v. 28), that He who appeared to them was really the same Jesus whom they had known and loved, but in a newer and far higher condition, and that He had raised man's whole nature above death into a new and higher life.

But, far beyond its immediate purpose for the first disciples, it probably has a deep and abiding significance, as exhibiting the firstfruits and therefore containing the promise of the great spiritual transformation to which the whole creation looks forward, whether consciously or not.

The discrepancies in the above narratives are such as we should expect, when we remember that the narrators were women who were thrown into an unutterable state of confusion and fear by the startling and most unexpected things they saw and heard. It would be no wonder if they were not sure afterwards of what had happened: whether the angel was inside or outside the grave; whether there were one or two angels; what exactly their message was. It would be no wonder if one woman said one thing and one another. They all, however, agree about the fact that Christ's body, which they had come to anoint, was not there; and all, except perhaps Mary Magdalene (see below), agree that they saw either one angel or two, who told them the explanation of the empty grave, and reminded them of our Lord's own words about His Resurrection.

Perhaps the following was the sequence of events. It is, at any rate, a possible way of combining the different narratives.

A company of women, including Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Mary the mother of James—the same women, no doubt, who were at the Crucifixion 'beholding from afar'[1]—went very early on Easter Day to the tomb, carrying the spices they had prepared for anointing Christ's dead body. On the way they were wondering how they should get the stone rolled away. As soon as they got to the tomb, they found it was rolled away, so that they could go in. They went in, to do what they had come to do, and at once saw that the body was not there. Thereupon Mary Magdalene, without waiting at all, ran back at once to get help from the men; went to S. Peter and S. John, and said, 'They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him.'[2] Meanwhile, the other women stayed at the tomb, and were greatly terrified by the sudden appearance of either one angel or two—some said one, perhaps only saw one; some said two—who told them that Christ had risen as He said. As the accounts must have come from the women themselves, it seems most natural to account for the discrepancies in

[1] S. Matt. xxvii. 55, 56. [2] S. John xx. 1, 2.

the stories here by supposing that some of the women said one thing, some another. It is more likely than unlikely that this should have been the case. The appearance of the angel, some said, was as lightning, and his raiment white as snow : and for fear of him the watchers did quake and become as dead men.[1] They thought his descent from heaven had caused an earthquake, which had rolled away the stone. Others said there were two men, who suddenly stood by them in dazzling apparel : and as they were affrighted and bowed down their faces to the earth, they gave them the message.[2] Then it may well have been that this vision and message had very different effects on different women. Some did as the angel had bidden and departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring the disciples word. And behold, Jesus met them, saying, 'All hail.' And they came and took hold of His feet and worshipped Him.[3] Others were so utterly terrified by what had happened that they went out and fled from the tomb ; for trembling and astonishment had come upon them ; and they said nothing to anyone ; for they were afraid.[4]

Then the rest of the disciples, hearing the report of the women, disbelieved, thinking they were distracted and talking nonsense. But Peter and John, in response to Mary Magdalene's plain statement of what was obviously a fact, ran to the tomb, S. John believing on account of what he saw, while S. Peter only departed to his home, wondering at that which had come to pass.[5] Mary Magdalene followed the two apostles back to the tomb as fast as she could, and when she got there she stayed there and received her revelation, which must be thought of very carefully, for we may be sure that everything that happened and every word she heard must have been burnt into her, so that she could not make any mistake about it afterwards. Her grief was so great that it overcame all fear, and made her simply intent on finding out all she could about where the body was.

[1] S. Matt. xxviii. 2–4.
[2] S. Luke xxiv. 4, 5.
[3] S. Matt. xxviii. 8, 9.
[4] S. Mark xvi. 8.
[5] S. John xx. 8 ; S. Luke xxiv. 12.

All the accounts agree as to the fact that the grave was empty. And it would be natural and obvious to anyone to accept the explanation of the fact which the rest of the history gives, unless he felt sure on *a priori* grounds that such explanation is impossible. But anyone who believes in Christ at all would indeed be a rash man if he affirmed that this was impossible.

Now consider *the significance of the empty tomb.* We need not dwell long on its primary purpose. The disciples needed something very startling to wake them out of their torpor. Yet they probably could not have received the revelation which Christ's appearance brought, unless they had been thus prepared for it. But its main significance to them, no doubt, was that it enabled them afterwards to realize that Christ had won a complete victory for man over death and sin. They probably could not have believed in the resurrection of Christ's body, apart from this sign, for they expected, as we do not, that what was put into the grave would rise from it, if the body was to rise at all. And Christ, of course, revealed Himself to them and His victory in such ways as they could understand. As we said, if the revelation had been made to a later age, the outward signs might have been different. Nevertheless, it seems at least probable that the manner of the Resurrection, as it was made known to the first disciples, has an abiding significance for all ages, and that we should lose a great deal that we may know of the essence of the gospel, if we were to reject this sign.

The story of the empty tomb and its teaching as to the manner of Christ's Resurrection is rejected by many in our day, who believe in Christ and in His Resurrection. They say, 'We cannot believe in a resurrection of remains any longer. Why should the last set of particles which clothed the body of Jesus when He died be raised any more than all the former ones which had clothed it?' They say further, 'Do not let us drive people away from faith in Christ and His Resurrection, by obliging them to believe it took place in one particular way which seems to them impossible.' And it is true that the one necessary thing is for men to

believe *in Christ Himself*, and that it is wrong to say that men are denying the faith and are heretics, because they cannot believe that Christ rose as, i.e. in the particular way that, has been supposed hitherto in Christendom. Yet, while we should gladly acknowledge this, we also see no sufficient reason for denying what the record so plainly says about the empty tomb: and we can go on to consider that we are perhaps by means of this sign on the track of a very great discovery.

The objectors say, 'Why should the last set of particles be raised?' We may answer, 'Why should they not, if there is an adequate cause?' S. Paul tells us that 'the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together,' and that 'we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body'; and that 'the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God.[1] Even apart from this teaching of S. Paul, human thought cannot rest short of this. We are sure that this continual flux must have an end, must issue in some permanency. Further, we are being taught by various sciences to see that 'matter' is probably not something distinct from spirit, but rather a lower manifestation of it, so that matter when it reaches its highest condition will be seen to be spiritual. Then the whole history of the Church affords abundant evidence of the wonderful power which holy people have over matter. The more a person is filled with spiritual life, the more power he seems to have to transform matter into a spiritual condition; e.g. the power of prayer over bodies, the wonderful changes in the faces of people as they become holier, the power of faith to cure disease, &c., &c. Compare the achievements of 'Christian Science,' which are professedly gained by making use of the spiritual life which surrounds us. Then consider that Christ never sinned; that when He died He was in perfect union with God, so that the Spirit of God had free access to all parts of His human nature. What is more probable than that this influx of the Spirit should have raised every particle with which His body was then clothed into its highest

[1] Rom. viii. 19–23.

possible condition, i.e. should have made them all spiritual —perfect instruments of His Spirit ?

Thus we not only can believe, but have abundant reason for believing, that the Gospel stories state a fact which has deep significance for us : that the body and all that belonged to it, which was put in the grave, was transformed into a spiritual body with spiritual particles (whatever that means) to clothe it ; and that this Resurrection body is the first-fruits and the promise of the transformation of the whole material creation into its highest, i.e. a spiritual, condition, which will take place when all the human race have become sons of God and are entirely in union with Him and therefore perfect instruments of His Spirit.

Meanwhile, it gives us the hope of all kinds of wonderful transformations in our bodies, as we get nearer to the final consummation.

The Revelation to Mary Magdalene.—**S. John xx. 1–18 ; [S. Mark] xvi. 9–11.**

The record makes it plain that our Lord was able to reveal Himself first to the women and make them, rather than His chosen apostles, the first preachers of His Resurrection, because their devotion to Him was more whole-hearted and they were willing to make greater ventures for His sake.

And of all the women, except the Blessed Virgin Mary, of whom no record is given, He was able for the same reason to reveal Himself the most fully to Mary Magdalene.

S. John's account of this manifestation of Christ goes on to show that He revealed Himself to Mary as He did, not only to reward her for her devotion and satisfy her need, but chiefly that He might lead her on to far deeper devotion and higher ventures of faith than she had yet made, and so be able to associate her very closely with Himself for the work of the regeneration of the human race.

Christ's men disciples were overwhelmed by the sense of their own loss and danger : the women were thinking of what they could do for their Master. In the one case love of self prevailed : love of Christ in the other. Hence our Lord was able to reveal Himself first to the women. We may be sure there is a moral necessity about this. God's

higher modes of self-revelation can only avail for His creatures in proportion as they are self-forgetful and loving as He is. The full beatific vision will be seen only by those who are 'like him.'[1] Those women were all able to receive a revelation of Christ, which the men could not have received, because they were more loving. For observe that the manifestations which Christ gave were not of the mere fact of His Resurrection, i.e. that He had conquered physical death, (if that had been His aim, He would no doubt have appeared openly to all the people instead of only to His chosen disciples,) but of His risen life, i.e. of Himself living in human nature the life of God. Thus the communications which He desired to make, and did make whenever people were capable of receiving them, were of His own life. And the faithful, loving disciples became 'witnesses of His Resurrection,' not merely or chiefly because they were able to say they had seen Him alive after His Passion, but because they themselves had received and were actually living His risen life.

Take, for example, these women. They had formed themselves into a kind of sisterhood to minister to Jesus, and they were bound together by their love for Him. So sincere was their love that He could communicate Himself to them on Easter day. Afterwards they became, no doubt, a band of witnesses for Him such as you are meant to be; not merely because they could all say they had seen Christ alive after His death, but because people who came into their company would find that they were women who loved each other greatly, and were very gentle and loving with all the sinners, the sorrowful, the sick and needy who came to them; who were in fact living on earth, though with many imperfections, the same human life that Christ is living now in heaven.

What is told of the rest of the women in a few sentences is told of Mary Magdalene with much detail. If, as we believe, it was S. John the apostle who told the story, we may be sure that every detail was indelibly imprinted on his mind, and that every one is therefore an integral part

[1] 1 S. John iii. 2.

of the gospel of the Resurrection for all generations. For we are told that S. John, having seen the grave clothes, had already 'believed' the story of the Resurrection which the others disbelieved, and therefore we can be sure that every word Mary told him would sink into his mind. We ought, therefore, to examine the story very carefully.

Let us first try to imagine Mary Magdalene's condition of mind and heart on Easter morning.

Think what Christ had been to her. He had delivered her from awful bondage to evil; He had cast out from her seven devils, as it is said.[1] This may mean that she was under the dominion of what we know as the 'seven deadly sins.' It must mean that she was in an appalling condition. Jesus delivered her from this, and then offered her His friendship, treating her as permanently His own and as though she had had no dreadful past. She is depicted as a very loving woman, so we can imagine to some extent what Jesus was to her: that He was all that she wanted, that her whole mind and heart were filled with Him. Then she saw Him dead and buried, and we can well understand the picture of her which the Gospel gives on Easter morning. Her one thought, like that of the other women, was to do what she could for His dead body, for that was all that was left to her of Him. Then when she goes to the tomb to anoint the body, she finds it is not there. Something has happened: someone has taken it. She must at all costs find who has taken it and where it is. There is nothing else to be done or thought of. So she does the most natural thing—runs at once without any delay (the other women wait where they are) to Peter and John, the two men who are the most likely to help. They ran off at once and were at the tomb long before she could get back. Perhaps they had gone by the time she did get back; perhaps she made other inquiries in Jerusalem and did not return till she had exhausted all possible means of help. But she went back, perhaps hoping that the body had been put back, and 'looked into the tomb.' Then 'she beholdeth two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the

[1] [S. Mark] xvi. 9; S. Luke viii. 2.

feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.' It is of a piece with the rest of the story that no word is said about her alarm at this. (Contrast the accounts of the other women, S. Matt. xxviii. 4, 8; S. Mark xvi. 6, μὴ ἐκθαμβεῖσθε, a strong word, implying that they were greatly alarmed; and S. Luke xxiv. 5.) Her mind is filled with the one thought, that she had lost all that was left her of her Lord. Hence her natural answer to the angels' question. She simply said what she had said to the two apostles; except that she altered 'the Lord' into 'my Lord.' 'When she had said this, she turned herself back,' perhaps because she was going to look for the body elsewhere, as it was no use to look any longer in the tomb; perhaps because she *felt* the presence of Jesus behind her: 'and beholdeth Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.' He was, of course, the last person she could have expected to see, and we may suppose that her head was bowed down and her eyes filled with tears, so that she merely knew that some man was there, and would not have recognized Him even if He had appeared exactly in the form she knew.

Christ's revelation to her began with the words, 'Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?' The last words must have struck her, as they were no doubt meant to do. She remembered them vividly, and told S. John that Jesus had added this to the angels' inquiry. The question was enough to, and probably did, uplift her to some extent out of her hopeless sorrow. 'Whom seekest thou?' She was seeking a dead body—was dwelling on the past. The question would appeal to an instinct, which is probably in all men, and would remind her that she ought to be seeking the person who alone satisfied her heart, instead of merely His dead body, and whom she must believe to be in existence somewhere. (The history of man seems to show that it is almost impossible for men, who have any consciousness of personal life, to imagine that that personal life can cease to be.) But the question, though it probably prepared her somewhat to receive what was to follow, did not raise her mind above the thought that all she had left of her Lord was His dead body: her answer, in which

she called the dead body 'him,' showed that her one only desire was to get it. Then came the word which at once changed her whole outlook on life, 'Mary,' from the supposed gardener. This convinced her at once that her Lord had indeed come back to her; perhaps because He spoke in the same tone as of old—said 'Mary' in the same way; perhaps because He had thus recalled her to her true self long ago, when He delivered her from the evil one. We can well imagine that the word would imply to her not only that He was alive, but that He had come back to *her*, and that the old relationship remained unchanged. Hence at once, without waiting to reason as to how He could be there, although He had died and been buried, she turned to Him to resume the old relationship; to cling to and give herself as of old to Him, who had become in such wonderful ways her beloved Master.

But, wonderful and satisfying as this revelation must have been to her, she had not yet received the gospel of the Resurrection. Our Lord's next words to her were probably a considerable shock at first, for of them she could only have understood the first ones, 'take not hold of me,' or 'do not cling to me.' But we may be sure that before our Lord left her and sent her on her errand He had at least made it clear that, if the same relationship as before was not to be resumed, it was because it was superseded by a far higher one; that He was not only to her what He had been before, but far more, and that, if she could not understand this now, she would presently. The message He told her to give to the disciples must have been incomprehensible to her at first, but yet it must have been greatly stimulating, as opening up undreamed of vistas before her mind, and encouraging her to open her heart as wide as possible. We can think of her in the future years with the message before her mind, as its meaning was gradually unfolded to her, constantly encouraged by it to make fresh ventures, and through them realizing more and more what Christ is, not to her only but to mankind.

This story is an integral part of the gospel of the Resurrection, as we said. Its study ought, therefore, to enable us

to realize more truly how Christ appeals to those who love Him, and what the object of His appeal is. Mary at Easter, when she first realized that the Lord had come back to her, was absorbed in a love which with all its beauty was to a large extent selfish. We are not to blame her for this. Hers was, no doubt, the highest kind of love she knew of. Her Master was *her* Master; she had lost Him; she was overwhelmed by grief at her own loss. When He came back to her, she felt she had Him again and therefore nothing else mattered. The old friendship was to be resumed, and she wanted nothing more. The same kind of selfishness has been mistaken by many a Christian mystic for the highest kind of love. If 'the prayer of union' can be attained to; if one can attain to that close friendship with Jesus, then the end of all earthly struggle is gained—that is, fruition. How often we ourselves have felt something of this! At times of prayer, when Christ has filled our hearts with joy because of our conscious union with Him, we have been tempted to feel 'it is good for us to be thus. What can we want more? Oh, that we could remain in this state of joy; it would be the end of all our labour.'

Now consider Christ's message as given to Mary, who thought she had attained the end of her desires. 'Go to my brethren, and say to them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God.' It meant that He as man had attained to the life of complete union with the Father—God—the eternal love; and that He had won this life for all mankind, who all had or could through Him become true sons of God, sharers in His sonship. It was as though he said, 'I reveal to you my true life, that which was the goal of all my struggles. It is that of one who, though man, is a true Son of God—who lives wholly by the life of God. And in revealing this, I am revealing also your true life, the true life of all men. Go and proclaim this. Proclaim the actual ascent of man to God—the potential ascent of all men.' What could this mean to her, as the force of the words gradually dawned upon her, but that she must give herself wholly to help to make this potential ascent of men actual? How could she any more be satisfied

merely with her own union with Christ, while men and women all round her were not in union with Him, though they were meant to be? How could she ever acquiesce in any selfishness either her own or others, and not believe that it could be overcome? What ventures of faith she could make! And how greatly her heart would be enlarged in making them! We can imagine her believing more and more in Christ's power, in the efficacy of His ascended life, until she was wholly an instrument for the exercise of that power.

And this was the purpose of Christ's revelation to her—that she should become this. It is the purpose for which He reveals Himself to us, for which He gives us all the joy we get from communion with Him. The same tremendous possibilities are before us that He put before Mary and His apostles by His message 'I ascend.' Man is living in perfect union with God—is living his life of love; and all men can be and are meant to be. And we are sent to witness to this, and to help to make what is potential for all men actual. We must, therefore, venture greatly: we cannot live a small life. We must be sure that all our selfishness can be conquered, and that all men, whatever they are like now, can become loving. Christ means us to live in this faith and hope, and therefore to spend all ourselves in pouring out the love of Christ to all with whom we come in contact. Men become loving through being in contact with Christ's love. And it is our great vocation to enable men to be in contact with Christ's love, because we are loving them, i.e. giving ourselves to and for them—spending ourselves in their service.

Christ's words, then, were intended to lift Mary up into a new and higher region. The old was done with; it was to be fulfilled in a new and higher relationship with Christ. Let us examine this more.

What did Christ do to lift her up into a higher region? When we were discussing the relation of reason to faith, by way of introduction to these Gospel stories of the Resurrection, we were thinking that our reason is meant to enable us to explore the truths which belong to the realm

in which we live ; that according as we live habitually in a higher or lower realm, the quality of our reason is higher or lower. Reason may be that of the merely intellectual man, or the moral man, or the spiritual man. That of the latter is of the highest quality : he has the mind of Christ, and has vast realms of truth for his reason to exercise itself on, which are shut to those who have not attained to life in this high region. But reason has not the power to gain access for us into the higher region. For this man needs something which may induce him to make the ventures of faith, through which he can ascend into the highest region. This something is a movement of God towards the man ; for remember that God always moves towards us before we do or can move towards Him.

Now consider Christ's revelation to Mary in this light. Her mind was full of her old relationship with Jesus, when He spoke to her. Her reason was very active, we are sure, in this region, and she was willing to do all she could for Him in this relationship, which was the only one she knew. That was all she could attain to by herself. See how vividly the impossibility of her getting into the new region of herself is shown. Then came Christ's words, showing her that the old relationship was not to go on as it was, but was to be fulfilled in a far higher one. 'Cling not to me.' 'I ascend. . . .' That was a call to her to lift up herself into a new and entirely unknown region. (The force of our Lord's words was not manifested at first, but afterwards—after Pentecost probably. This was the force of them, however, from the first.)

How Mary and the other disciples could have made the tremendous ventures they did make is hard for us to imagine. But remember that our Lord had given Mary abundant reasons for trusting Him and for wanting to follow Him wherever He went. Hence we may be sure that when the meaning of His words became apparent to her, and even though she could no longer see Him with her eyes or touch Him, because He had ascended out of sight, she would be able to make the venture of faith by which she would lift herself up to Him where He was, i.e. in His heavenly con-

dition—lift herself up into union with Him Who is perfected man, the life-giving head of the whole human race.

And then what a prospect would open before her mind and heart! What vast scope she would find now for her reason and affections! For example, she had before been absorbed in the thought of her own personal relation to Jesus. Now she would be absorbed in the thought that this glorious Lord and Saviour of hers was the Lord and Saviour of all men, that He had suffered and died in order that He might become this. Hence, whereas before she had been trying to do what she could for His dead, wounded body, now she would try to do all she could for His mystical body, mankind, to minister to its wounds and needs, to spend herself in serving her fellow men for Jesus' sake. And if she felt 'what can one woman do for Him in this way?' then she who had been so wonderfully delivered and strengthened long ago by Christ would be able to make very great ventures of faith: 'I can do all things that He puts it in my heart to do, through Him, my glorious ascended Lord. I can rise to any ideal He puts before me—can conquer any sins and weaknesses and selfishness He has made me aware of—can gain from Him sufficient love to forget myself and give myself away wholly in His service.' Forget herself in this vast life with all its opportunities! No one can live in this high region with our Lord and be absorbed in self.

This is just one example of the process by which men and women become saints. We have little difficulty in believing that the Church is right in proclaiming that this woman is to be reverenced as *Saint* Mary Magdalene. Let us also accept this vivid and beautiful story as an instance of the way in which our Lord is working in the lives of all of us. We too are 'called to be saints' and in the same kind of way. Our Lord's detailed method differs, of course, in each age and with each individual. But there is a very vivid instance of His working before us now, this Advent and Christmas.[1] We are face to face with a great day of judgment, which Christ has made—a clear and awful separa-

[1] A.D. 1915.

tion between those who are guided by His Spirit and those who have renounced His guidance and given themselves to another. We see the manifest effects of the one spirit and the other, and especially the appalling effects of greed and the lust of power, as we have never seen them before.

It is a time in which our Lord is calling us very plainly to new ventures of faith. Men are ranging themselves on one side or the other. And the wonderful thing is that the great majority of people in nearly all civilized countries are ranging themselves on Christ's side. There is to be, and will be if only we Christians are faithful, a great increase of His kingdom—a wonderful new ascent of man to God. The prospect and opportunity for us all is so vast that we feel it will be disgraceful if we do not rise above all mere selfish considerations. Yet we do not find it easy to do this—to get up into the higher atmosphere. Let us fall back on this story of Mary Magdalene. It was impossible for her, till Jesus came to her and showed her the way. Even then she could not have followed, if He had not previously given her sufficient reasons for trusting Him.

Our case is similar. As then, so now our Lord is opening up a vast prospect before us, a similar message ' I ascend,' i.e. in this human family of mine. And as then, so now He wants entirely faithful disciples, through whom He may work out His purpose. It does not matter much what else they are or are not, so long as they are faithful lovers of His, who are ready to give up their own things and make great ventures of faith for Him, especially in prayer. The particular ventures He requires from each of us are indicated by the ideals He is setting before us now. First, He is asking us to rise above whatever selfishnesses are holding us back, and He is no doubt showing each of us clearly what are the things that are enchaining us and so keeping us back from the freedom of service of Christ. What are they ? And secondly, He is asking us to fill our minds and hearts with His needs, i.e. the needs of His people—His body, so that all our powers are spent in supplying them.

To comply with these requests we must trust to Him

that He can and will enable us to free ourselves from whatever chains bind us and keep us back from rising into the higher atmosphere; and we must believe that He, the ascended Lord, Who is infinitely more solicitous about the needs of humanity than we are, will certainly give us the wisdom, patience, gentleness, humility and love which are necessary, that we may do what He asks us to do.

The Revelation to the Two Disciples at Emmaus.—S. Luke xxiv. 13–35; [S. Mark] xvi. 12, 13.

This revelation shows how Christ becomes known to those whose faith is impeded by intellectual difficulties. The revelation to Mary Magdalene was to one whose heart was wounded by the loss of her Lord whom she loved; this was to disciples whose minds had been wounded by the events which had happened, on account of which they could no longer believe, as they formerly did, that Jesus was the destined redeemer of Israel.

Christ's method of revealing Himself to them enables us to understand that only in so far as men's hearts have their true exercise can their minds arrive at the truth of God; and, therefore, that faithful witnesses to Christ and His Resurrection are not only or chiefly those who can supply facts and proofs of the truth to men's minds, but rather they who so possess the character and live the life of Christ that they are able to bring men into personal contact with Him.

The State of Mind of the Two Disciples when Jesus came to them.—Their minds were full of the thought of Him; so much so that they could not imagine how it could be otherwise with anyone who had lately been in Jerusalem.[1] Also they retained some faith in and loyalty to their Master, so that they did not mind showing to this stranger that they had been His disciples: though if they had reflected, if their minds had not been so full of Him, they would have seen that this was a highly dangerous thing to do. In courage and loyalty, i.e. in affection, they seem to have been midway between the women and the apostles (except S. John and S. Peter). Hence probably our Lord was able to reveal Himself to them, as He had already to the women and John and Peter, and through them to prepare the rest

[1] S. Luke xxiv. 17, 18.

of the apostles for His revelation. But their faith in Him and hope concerning Him had been almost completely destroyed by the events which had happened—His condemnation, crucifixion, and death.[1] Their minds had indeed been stirred a little by the report of the women, taken along with His own words about the third day.[2] Yet they did not see what it meant, and it was not enough to remove their deep depression.[3] They had not met anyone who had actually seen Him.[4] Hence also no doubt ' their eyes were holden that they should not know him.' [5] For it seems that the Resurrection body of Jesus was not such that it could be recognized as His body by the mere sight of the eyes, and that Jesus not only did not but could not manifest Himself after His Resurrection to any but believers. Probably the risen Jesus can only be seen by what we call spiritual sight, by which, for example, we recognize one with whom we are united, who has come to us in spirit while his body is far away : we recognize him, not because some outward substance has produced the sight of him, but because his coming has produced in our souls the consciousness of his presence. Our Lord's coming to people might produce the impression even to unbelievers that someone was there, though they would not be able to ' know him ' till the eyes of their minds and hearts had been opened, so that they could *believe,* and thus be in union with Him.

Christ's Revelation of Himself to them.—His complaint of them was that they were ' foolish men, and slow of heart to believe. . . .' [6] The whole story seems to show that this means that their minds could not work properly—could not make true reports—because their hearts were not open to receive and act upon the light that had come. Hence our Lord made His appeal not directly to their minds at all, but to their hearts. Observe that He could do this, because there was still, as we saw, much real affection for Him in them. Their hearts were ' slow ' indeed, but not shut to Him. Afterwards they confessed, ' Was not our

[1] S. Luke xxiv. 19–21.
[2] *Ibid. vv.* 21–24.
[3] *Ibid. v.* 17.
[4] Contr. [S. Mark] xvi. 14.
[5] S. Luke xxiv. 16.
[6] *Ibid. v.* 25.

heart burning within us, while he . . . opened to us the scriptures?' This enables us to understand the kind of way in which He 'interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself.'[1] His method could not have been that of giving them 'proof texts,' or reminding them that this prophet and that had said this and that, and that the things they had spoken of beforehand had actually happened. This kind of argument from prophecy could never by itself convert anyone or make His heart burn. But rather, appealing to their hearts—to the affection God had implanted in them for receiving this very appeal—He must have shown them that the whole Old Testament is a record of how God the Father has ever been seeking His people and trying to make friends with them; how He has loved them always in spite of all their rebellion; how He has longed for them to come back; how sorely it has grieved Him to have to punish them so much and so often; yet that He was willing to do anything rather than suffer them to go on banishing themselves from Him and ruining themselves; how He suffered in their sufferings, because He was their Father; how He had to bear agony through their sins; how He had pleaded with them and opened His heart. We can imagine Him quoting such passages from the prophets as give a brief epitome of God's relations to His dear but sinful people.[2] Then He must have gone on to show them, still appealing to their capacity for understanding love and its ways, that His own Passion and death was but the clear manifestation in a human life of what God had always been suffering because of His people's sins, and of what He had always willingly borne in order to save them, and through them all men, from sin. 'O slow of heart . . . behoved it not the Christ—the anointed of God—to suffer these things and to enter into his glory?'[3] 'Do not your hearts understand that God's glory is the glory of love, and that He who represents and manifests

[1] S. Luke xxiv. 27, 32.

[2] E.g. Hosea ii. 14–23; iii.; xi. 1–4; xiv.; Isa. i. 1–20; xlix.–lxvi. *passim*, especially liii.

[3] S. Luke xxiv. 26.

Him *must* suffer to the uttermost, just because He loves to the uttermost and His dear ones have gone astray from Him and corrupted themselves; that God could not be God the Father, if He could see His people in the condition in which they are and not suffer—not be willing to bear their sins, i.e. to do all that could possibly be done to deliver them from sinfulness; that God was, in His anointed One, reconciling the world unto Himself?' Think of Jesus Himself making such an appeal to the two men. Think of the glowing words proceeding from *His* heart, and that all men's hearts are made to respond to God; and we shall not be surprised that their hearts burned within them; that what they now saw with their hearts enabled them to see through and beyond all the seeming contradictions which had blinded their minds, so that they only needed a very little more to open their eyes that they might know Him.

Their hearts were glowing so that when 'he made as though he would go further' they constrained Him, saying, 'Abide with us; for it is towards evening, and the day is now far spent.' He went in to share with them their evening meal. No wonder they gave Him the place of honour, so that He took the loaf, and said the grace.[1] There is no reason at all for thinking that this was a Eucharist. It is not the least like it, but just like an ordinary evening meal. Moreover, the Eucharist would have meant nothing to them, unless He had explained it as He did to the apostles when He instituted it. They probably had not even heard of it. But no doubt they had often seen Him presiding at an evening meal, and probably something in His way of taking the bread and of saying grace—how different these actions must have been, when He did them, from those of anyone else!—was sufficient to enable them to recognize Him, now that their opened and illuminated hearts had enabled their minds to see through and therefore overcome what had hitherto seemed an insuperable difficulty.

This story shows what Christ means when He asks us to be witnesses of Him and His Resurrection.—As Christ revealed Himself then, so does He now whenever He can;

[1] S. Luke xxiv. 28–31.

for human nature is the same now as then, and He is the same always. Hence the gain of studying these Resurrection stories carefully. The main theme of Christian theology is how the risen Christ comes into contact—becomes one with—His disciples, and through them with the rest of the world. He reveals Himself to men's hearts principally, not to their minds. There are two reasons for this, which we can see, and the two are really two parts of one. (1) Our minds, apart from the illumination which comes from our hearts, are most unreliable instruments in the moral and spiritual sphere. This is putting it too weakly. Man's mind is of no use for the things of the kingdom of heaven, till the man himself has entered it. Hence God's revelation of Himself to man cannot be perceived or understood by our minds till He has entered and lit up our hearts. Man's mind by itself is of no more use for showing him the things of the kingdom of heaven than a beautifully made flashlight apparatus is, without the electricity, for showing the things of earth in the darkness! (2) God is love, i.e. a personal being, whose whole being is entirely engaged in loving. And loving, as we know, means giving one's life to enter into and fill others. But the part of our nature where such personal communications take place is our 'heart.' It is a communication of love and can only be received and returned in that part of our nature by which we love.

To point this out is not to disparage our mind, but only to show what is necessary to it that it may act in its highest sphere of action. When Christ has entered a man's heart, then his mind becomes filled with light, and he is able to understand great truths about God, which were hidden from him before and which are mere foolishness to his mind, if it is left to itself. When Christ has entered the hearts of His disciples, then, but not before, there can be all the rich treasures of Christian theology. The great doctors of the Church were also saints. The glorious theology of S. John and S. Paul was the result of their abiding in Christ and His abiding in them.

This explains Christ's whole method of revealing Him-

self even before His Resurrection; many of His difficult sayings, and a great deal of our own experience. Christ never expected men's minds to understand Him till His union with them had been effected. He always refused to give 'signs' which might convince their minds, because He knew that was of no use. His 'signs' were signs of His love, which, if they appealed to men at all, appealed to their hearts. He revealed Himself to His chosen disciples by becoming their friend and evoking the love of their hearts; their minds were very dull and did not understand His teaching much up to the time of His death; but they did afterwards when their hearts were filled with His Spirit. When at Capernaum the people and even the disciples murmured at His teaching, because their minds said it was impossible, He explained 'no man can come to me, except the Father which sent me draw him.'[1] This does not mean that the Father chooses some to whom to reveal Himself and rejects others: but that no man can come to Him till his heart has been touched by the Father's love. Then the puzzles which his mind could not grasp disappear. Verses 61–63 appear to mean 'your minds will have things to bear, which are even harder than these words of Mine—how, indeed, can any man's mind grasp the truth that the Son of Man is one with God! But it is the Spirit that quickeneth: your minds cannot go beyond the realm in which you now are: but when the love of God has come and filled your hearts, then you will have been lifted up into a new realm—the heavenly—and your minds will then be able to grasp the truths of that realm, because they are *your* minds.'[2]

S. Paul teaches this same truth very plainly to the intelligent Corinthians.[3] The Jews seek signs which may convince their minds; the Greeks seek to discuss the truth of God through systems of philosophy: but we proclaim God's love as manifested in Christ, which appears to the minds of men who can only grasp the wisdom of this world either revolting or mere foolishness, but which is

[1] S. John vi. 44, 61–65. [2] Cf. S. John xii. 32.
[3] E.g. 1 Cor. i. 21–24.

to those whose hearts have been touched by Christ, and who have therefore entered into His life, both the power of God, i.e. the highest power there is, and the highest wisdom. He expounds this more fully still in chap. ii., as we shall see clearly if while we are reading it we remember that the Spirit of God is the love of God. When the mind is informed by the heart, it can understand God's ways, but not till then.[1] Christ exults in the Holy Spirit, because His Father had revealed His truths to such people as the Seventy, who were as compared with the wise of the earth *νήπιοι* ('babes'); i.e. that His truth was not esoteric—for the few learned ones—but for all, because all, though they may not have great minds, have hearts and can love and be enthusiastic, as the Seventy. He is full of joy, because God has revealed and is revealing Himself in the way that *all* can understand.

And the process which Christ employed in His own person that day on the way to Emmaus is the same as that which He employs now through His disciples, whenever they will let Him—the only process by which He can win men. Hence they who are to be 'his witnesses' in every age must be people who, before all else, are living His life and can therefore manifest His love. They may or may not be clever, or philosophers, or theologians: they *must* be one with Christ, so that whatever powers they have are exercised by love. For the love of Christ is the only thing which can win men's hearts, i.e. win men. Knowledge of theology is of course often most necessary for removing misconceptions which shut men's hearts, e.g. false ideas of the Atonement, which seem to men, and are, immoral and unworthy of God. And theological knowledge is of the utmost value for developing the characters and minds of those who are already Christ's disciples. But men become disciples only when Christ's beauty has touched their hearts. And Christ's beauty is seen in those who are living Christ's life, whether they are professed teachers or not; e.g. the soldier who, finding the dead body of a solitary German

[1] See 1 S. John iv. 7, 8. Cf. S. Luke x. 21 (S. Matt. xi. 25, 26)—an unique passage in the Gospels.

in a wire entanglement, buried it and put some writing on a cross over the grave : ' This man died for his fatherland ; God be with him.' He was a far better witness for Christ and for the Atonement Christ made than any number of theologians would be, who were not showing Christ's life ; for in him men see Christ loving His enemies. The deeds which are constantly done in this war are showing men's hearts all over the world now what the Spirit of Christ is, in contrast with the spirit of the world, or anti-Christ.

This is full of encouragement for us all, for we can all love and therefore can all be witnesses for Christ. Hence for those who desire to bear witness to Christ, risen and ever-present, the first necessity is that they should unite themselves very closely to Him, through prayer and Holy Communion, so that His life may be in them and the source of their actions. Then, when it is, it does not matter what circumstances they are in, they are certain to be Christ's witnesses. They will not think whether they are being so or not—they will not try to be edifying. They forget themselves in their love of Christ. But they will, whether they know it or not, touch the hearts of men and women, and make them burn, as Christ Himself did on the way to Emmaus.

The Revelation to 'the disciples' at Jerusalem on Easter Evening.—**S. Luke xxiv. 36–43 ; [S. Mark] xvi. 34 ; S. John xx. 19–23.**

Our Lord, by this revelation of Himself, first convinced His apostles that He was really with them again, and so removed the obstruction to the free exercise and development of their loving trust in Him.

Then He proceeded to raise them up into a new realm of being, by giving them a new birth into His own risen life, which is nothing less than the life of perfect Sonship which is His eternally, and in which His human nature is now for ever immersed : the result of which was that they became ' sent ' as He was sent, for the purpose of effecting the salvation of the whole human race.

It is most probable, though not certain, that the appearance recorded in S. Luke and S. John is the same. In any case, the two accounts can be taken together, that of

S. John supplementing the other, of how our Lord revealed Himself on Easter Day to His apostles. And the revelation can be considered as given to the ten apostles, though [S. Mark] calls them 'the eleven,' as would be natural, even though S. Thomas was not there. The others who, S. Luke says, were with them are unknown to us, and can be disregarded now.

The State of Mind of the Apostles on Easter Evening.—Their state of mind was much the same as that of the two disciples (see above, p. 138), but rather worse. Their affection for Jesus was not destroyed, but their faith in Him as Messiah seems to have been destroyed completely. Their minds had received such a shock, through His condemnation and death, that all power of making ventures of faith seemed paralysed, and their minds had lost all hope. Nothing but fear—ignoble fear, also, for their own safety—was left. We can a little understand their collapse of faith, when we think what Jesus had been to them—the wonders they had seen—all that their minds had dwelt upon of His greatness and power (e.g. His feeding the multitudes, stilling the storm, healing the sick, raising the dead)—all the hopes they had therefore formed about His victory and the coming of His kingdom—all the reasons their minds had had for believing Him to be the promised Messiah. (Consider what this meant to Jews!) Then they had just seen that the Master who seemed all-powerful had been completely overcome by His enemies, condemned as a criminal, and killed. They had lately had presented to them the strongest possible evidence that Jesus was the Messiah, but their minds had no power to receive it, because it was evidence belonging, so to speak, to another sphere of being, higher than the one in which they lived. And man's mind is, as we have said, quite powerless to lift him into the higher sphere. That requires a process called by our Lord the birth of the Spirit, and till this takes place man's mind cannot even see the kingdom of God: its truths are foolishness to him. This explains, what we have all noticed, the futility of trying to convert people by argument. Explanations of the things of the kingdom of heaven, given to a

man who has not been born into it, are of less use than attempts to describe India and its people to those who have never been there. In the present condition of the apostles, nothing could explain to them the meaning of Christ's Passion and death, or make them think of it as anything but the contradiction of all they had previously believed about Him.

Our Lord's Revelation to them.—He had first to convince them that He was there; the explanation of how He could be there could follow later. He had begun the attack on their minds through the evidence of the women, especially of Mary Magdalene; then by that of S. Peter, to whom He had revealed Himself; and now by that of the two disciples. The accounts seem contradictory here. Perhaps the sequence of events was that the two disciples came and gave their report and were not believed, any more than the women had been;[1] that then S. Peter came and told them His news about seeing Jesus; and that this obliged them to repeat 'the Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.'[2] But they evidently did not realize the meaning of what they were saying, for when our Lord actually appeared and said, 'Peace be unto you,' they were terrified and affrighted, and thought it was a ghost, as we say.[3] It was quite a natural fear, for how could their minds have grasped the reality? Then He proceeded to convince them that it was really He, by showing them His hands and feet with the marks of the nails; then by inviting them to handle Him and see that His body was real, and then while their hearts were beginning to glow, though they still thought it too good to be true, He asked for food and ate it before them. Notice that this did not tell them anything about His new, risen life—did not lift them up into any new sphere of being, but simply did what was necessary as a first step: it convinced their minds that He really was there, the same Master who had eaten with them so often. We may be sure that this was the best way of convincing their minds in the state in which they then were. And at

[1] [S. Mark] xvi. 13. [2] S. Luke xxiv. 34.
[3] *Ibid. v.* 37.

once all their old affection for Him must have been in action, just as Mary Magdalene's was. They were His loving and beloved disciples again. This was probably all that they were conscious of. As their old union of heart was renewed, their mind for the time would cease to ask questions, and they would realize that Christ had really brought them 'peace.' Then S. Luke adds[1] an account of Christ's instructions to His disciples, which seems to be a condensation of what He said between Easter and the Ascension. We cannot tell how much, if any, He said during this interview: so we will disregard this passage for the present and proceed to S. John's account of what Christ did on this Easter evening.

S. John[2] makes it clear that the process by which our Lord had convinced the disciples of His identity was only the first and preliminary step. It marks a wonderful advance. At a similar point He had sent Mary Magdalene away with the message to the disciples, and had vanished from the two at Emmaus. Now the new thing happened to the men who were to be the main instruments through whom His Church was to be built. up Next to our Lord's own coming and death and resurrection, this may be said to be the greatest thing that had ever happened in the human race since its beginning. S. John is giving the account of the beginning of the lifting of ordinary human beings like ourselves from one sphere of being to another—from the kingdom of man into the kingdom of God—from the natural to the supernatural sphere: these are true and convenient ways of describing it. S. John says that as soon as He had convinced them of His reality, 'He breathed on them and saith unto them, "Receive Holy Ghost," "A gift of the Holy Ghost"' (Λάβετε Πνεῦμα Ἅγιον). It seems plain, though the whole passage is very difficult, that this was the beginning of that outpouring of the Spirit on men which had been spoken of by the prophets, promised by our Lord, and was made full on the day of Pentecost. And we may suppose that the gift was first given by this breathing of our Lord on the men that they might realize

[1] S. Luke xxiv. 44–49. [2] S. John xx. 19–23.

afterwards (1) that they had received a gift of new life analogous to the one which was said to have been given to man originally in the same way,[1] and (2) that it was a gift of Christ's own life. S. John evidently understood this.[2] Christ was giving them a share in His own risen and glorified human life. Probably the full gift could not come till the disciples had been enabled by His visible Ascension to realize that Christ had been lifted up into the fulness of God's life. The relation of this gift to the Pentecostal is probably analogous to that of the first gift of life which comes at birth with the full endowment with man's powers which comes after : or to that of the gift in Baptism to the full spiritual endowment which comes afterwards, through the laying on of hands, in the normal life of the Church.

Consider what Christ's glorified human life is. It is His life wholly filled with the Spirit of God. His whole struggle on earth had at last brought it about that man's nature could be wholly filled thus with God's love. He had brought all the powers of His human nature under the control of His will, and made His will wholly one with the will of God. This is to say that He as man loved God with all His heart and soul and mind and strength. In Him God and man lived the one life together of perfect love. This is the atonement He had effected. And therefore Christ's glorified human life, in its relation to the rest of mankind, is the same as God's. To love God perfectly is to be willing to spend oneself wholly in doing His will : and what is God's manifested will for man ? It is that the whole race should be saved, and till that is accomplished God cannot be satisfied. This He has proclaimed all through man's history. We thought of Christ explaining this to the two disciples, when He opened to them the Scriptures. His glorified human life is, therefore, the life which is used wholly to fulfil God's will, by bringing all men to Him. Christ is the servant as He is the lover of all men, because His whole human nature is filled with love for God ; because He is immersed in the eternal stream of love, which is the giving of the Son to the Father in the Holy Trinity.

[1] Gen. ii. 7. [2] See his note, S. John vii. 39.

When, therefore, Christ breathed this life into His apostles, He was giving to them a new birth into this heavenly life of the eternal Son ; giving to them and asking them to take and use the power of being so absorbed in the love of God that all their faculties should be spent in His service, which is also the service of their fellow men. They could now cease to seek their own things, and could live for God and spend themselves in fulfilling His will, as He had made it known to man, i.e. in doing what they could to bring all men to Him.

Hence our Lord's words, which accompany this gift, 'as the Father hath sent me even so send I you '—' your mission is my mission.' The Father sends the Son to be the Saviour of the world ; the disciples, therefore, having received the Son's life now wholly obedient to God, become 'sent'—apostles—for the same purpose. Henceforth their life is to be one of loving service of their fellow men. He did not on Easter-day lift them up into a mere condition of blissful contemplation, but into the way of God's love, into the life, hitherto supernatural to man, of giving themselves wholly to love God and therefore to bring men to Him.

Thus men filled with the Spirit of God keep the two commandments of Christ's law in their right order. Christ does not say, 'Love your fellow men, and that will create love for God.' He says, 'Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength,' giving the power to do so. And then He says, 'If you really love God, you *must* spend all your energies in bringing men to Him, for this is the only desire of His heart that He has made known to you. He is wounded by men's sins ; if you love Him, you must do all you can to bind up the wounds of His heart.' His heart cannot be satisfied till all men have come to Him : if you love Him, you must do all you can to bring them to Him.

This helps us to see the force of the last difficult words, whose meaning has so often been obscured by the mists of controversy : 'Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them. . . .' Christ's life and theirs was henceforth one and the same, and therefore it would have the same

effect in the world, so far as they lived it faithfully. The effect of Christ's life is judgment,[1] i.e. the manifesting and separating of good and evil in men. It is the true standard by which all human life is to be tested. It stirs up both the good and evil into activity. In this sense it causes division rather than peace.[2] Christ, then, said to His apostles in effect, 'You are to bear and manifest My life among men: I send you to do so, that you may bring salvation to men. Mine is the life—the only life—that can save men from sins. Therefore, those who receive you receive Me, and are released from their sins by receiving Me. But all will not receive you: they will oppose you as they did Me, and thus will become for the time at least hardened in sin—held fast by it more firmly than ever.'[3] Christ is no doubt speaking of what will happen when His life is truly lived and manifested by His disciples, and especially by those who are in authority in His Church. So far as they become lifeless, the effects He speaks of do not happen: their lives do not cause the same kind of judgment, or separation, among men that His life causes.

There is no direct reference here to the 'discipline' to be afterwards exercised by the officers of the Church. Our Lord seems to be saying that His 'sent ones' are so truly one with Him that the effect of their lives and His in the world are the same. The way in which the judgment was to be *declared* is not mentioned. That was no doubt left to the Church on earth to decide afterwards, and then the declaration would be a proclaiming the result of that which had previously happened, as the effect of the contact of the sinner with Christ's life manifested in His Church. Notice that the power described deals with sin, not with the punishment of sin. Nor is the power to be exercised only by preaching—proclaiming in words Christ's victory over sin. It is chiefly by the manifesting of Christ's risen life, which is victorious over sin, that men's consciences

[1] S. John ix. 39, &c. [2] E.g. S. Luke xii. 51–53.
[3] Cf. S. Matt. xvi. 19; xviii. 18; 1 Cor. v. 3–5; 2 Cor. ii. 10: Rev. iii. 7; S. John x. 9.

are touched, and men are stirred to want to be good, or alas! in some cases to hold more obstinately and defiantly on their sinful course. Christ's life, when it comes into contact with men, cannot leave them where it found them.

It is important to have a clear understanding of the force of Christ's words to His apostles, that we may see what His mission to His Church, i.e. to the individuals who compose it, is. The way upon which Christ here began to send His Church is His own way of contemplation and active service—the service of His Father, which is also the service of His fellow men. All the quiet, prayer, contemplation, which was in His life and was to be in theirs, was in order that their service might be the more strenuous and the more in accordance with the leading of divine wisdom instead of that of their own human spirit.

Christ had been 'sent' to gain the fulfilment of God's will for man. Christ's disciples are sent for precisely the same purpose. And God's will for man is nothing but His longing for the salvation of the whole race. All man knows about God in this life is that He is incessantly at work among men—that the whole desire of His heart is to win them to goodness. The contemplation of God's love, or nature, shows Him to our minds and hearts as wholly engaged in this work of man's salvation. We can contemplate Him in other ways; e.g. in ways suggested by philosophers: but if we do so, we are contemplating our own notions of Him, not Him as He has made Himself known to us. Such contemplation may—probably would—lead us to rejoice in it as an end. But the true contemplation can lead to nothing but an increased desire to fulfil His will for man. Hence the way of prayer taught by our Lord in 'the Lord's Prayer.' And hence the two types of disciples portrayed by Martha and Mary do not differ from each other in that one is active, the other contemplative (all true disciples of Christ *must* be very active), but in that one serves according to his own notions and led by his own impulses, the other waits upon God quietly, that he may serve according to God's knowledge and led by the impulses of God's Spirit.

Let us see all this by means of a parable. Suppose the

man who fell among thieves, in our Lord's parable,[1] had come to that state and received all those wounds through fighting our battles. He would then be a picture to us of God manifested in Christ. Then suppose Christ's disciple came along as the good Samaritan did, and, seeing him, gazed at him, contemplating his wounds and the fact that he had got them in his (the disciple's) service, till he was enraptured; in a kind of trance; full of wonderful sensations. Think of him remaining thus and seeking to remain indefinitely. Then suppose a small voice to come from the wounded one, 'that may be very joyful and entrancing for you, but if you really love me as you say you do, I shall be glad if you will do something to bind up these wounds, or if you are not skilled for it yourself, that you will go to seek help from some others.' What should we think if the other were to say, 'Oh! no; that is not for me. Let mine be Mary's—the better part. Let me go on gazing, enraptured by the contemplation of thy love. Let us wait for the binding up of the wounds till someone else comes along who is not capable of such contemplation as I am engaged in.' It is evident that, if the disciple were really in love, the sight and contemplation of the wounds would stir him—force him—to do all he could to minister to them. And God has told us that He suffers as only infinite love can, so long as man does not come to Him!

Now Christ's words become plainer. These men were sent by the Spirit, or love, which Christ breathed into them. They were to receive the fulness of that gift later on. Then their hearts would be filled with Holy Spirit, or love of God. They would wish to do nothing but love Him, i.e. not enjoy themselves through contemplation of Him, but serve Him in the only way He has told us He wants to be served by men. And no doubt because this is so hard a way, because men naturally seek their own enjoyment even in salvation, Christ at first denied the desire of Mary Magdalene to cling to Him, but sent her off on a message; disappeared from the two disciples as soon as they knew Him; and now, directly the apostles had become convinced that it was

[1] S. Luke x. 30.

really He, He proceeded to send them to do what He had been sent to do ; not to seek their own, but to forget themselves and spend themselves in loving God and bringing men to Him.

The Revelation to S. Thomas.—**S. John xx. 24–29.**

This revelation conveys to us further teaching as to what the faith is which our Lord strives to produce in His disciples, and as to the methods by which He strives to produce it.

The State of Mind of S. Thomas before our Lord appeared to Him.—The descriptions given above of the condition of the two disciples and of the apostles on Easter evening apply also to S. Thomas. But it seems that in his case there was an additional impediment to faith—a melancholy temperament. We have not much to go on for this, but what evidence there is seems to point in this direction. No incidents of his life are given by the Synoptists, and there are only three in S. John—this and the two following :—

S. John xi. 16. Jesus had spoken of the good that was to come from this journey to Lazarus. Thomas could only see darkness, that Jesus would be killed : we can imagine the gloom on his face as he said, ' let us also go, that we may die with him,' i.e. it is all over—that only remains—let us face it. He was of such a temperament that he could not accept by faith the good that was actually there, of which Christ knew and spoke. He could only see the danger.

S. John xiv. 5. Christ was speaking encouraging words, which ought to have made the disciples' hearts leap,[1] and He assumed that they understood Him. But S. Thomas could not rise to it. He could not *see* the end, and therefore he said, ' how know we the way ? ' i.e. ' we don't know anything about it : I wish we did : as it is, there is only darkness and confusion.' He was not ready to believe in the good news which Christ was telling, though it was the truth. He refused to accept anything he could not see. And so at Easter, when all the apostles went to him and said, ' it is all true, what the women and the two

[1] S. Luke x. 1–4.

disciples said : we have seen the Lord ourselves and know it is true,' he could not rise even to think it might be true.

If this is the right interpretation of the few facts about him which we are given, it would quite account for his being the last of the apostles to believe. He had had much evidence given him, and it seems that our Lord came at Easter when he was not there to give him a chance of leaping above his nature and accepting the truth by faith. But he would not—could not even contemplate the possibility of believing such good news as that of the Resurrection. ' Except I shall see . . . I *will not* believe.' For a melancholy temperament is a diseased one. The healthy one is that which refuses to be overcome by present darkness, and is sure that darkness will be dispersed at last by light, like, e.g. Browning, who ' never doubted clouds would break,' who was sure that ' all we have thought or hoped or dreamed of good shall exist, not its semblance but itself. . . .' Such an one is ready to receive the glorious truth of God, i.e. to receive Christ when He comes to him. But a sad one only says, ' It is too good to be true. Unless you give me some sign to make me quite certain, I will not believe.' Instead of thinking, as a healthy person should when good or the triumph of good is proclaimed, that it is probably true, he thinks that it probably is not. And since God is God, and man is made in His image, that is a very sure sign of a diseased temperament.

Our Lord's Revelation to Thomas.—He had given him many chances of believing, as we said, and now he had the combined testimony of the women, the two disciples, and all the other apostles. And we may presume that our Lord knew that no further chance of that kind would be of any use, and that the only thing left was to accept Thomas's own terms. He came just as the apostles told Thomas that He had come on Easter Day, and He gave them the same greeting. Then He made known to Thomas that He knew the state of his mind and had been present, though invisibly, when he made his terms before the other apostles. ' Reach hither thy finger . . . and *become* not faithless but believing.' As if to say, ' I accept your terms,

that you may not go from bad to worse and become altogether faithless, but that you may become (gradually) believing. I offer you this, because there is no other way of turning you from the wrong path into the right one.' We can understand that this must have been overwhelming, especially the fact that it clearly showed that Jesus had been truly though invisibly present, when Thomas spoke to the apostles and refused to believe. He could not resist such evidence as this. There was no need to make any venture of faith: he simply could not do otherwise than accept the evidence before him, that the Lord 'was risen as he said.' As well might a man refuse to believe in the power of dynamite, when he had just seen a tremendous explosion effected by it.

The Result of the Revelation.—It is often said that the result was that S. Thomas rose at once to a higher condition of faith than any of them, because he said the extraordinary words he did say—'my Lord and my God.' But this does not seem certain, or even very likely. It is well known that melancholy people, when they are at last convinced that the good they thought impossible has actually happened, are apt to go to extravagant lengths in the opposite direction. They are in an excitable and unstable condition of mind. One who is habitually ready to accept good news can accept it when it comes without losing his balance: while one who has determined beforehand that it is impossible, generally does lose his balance when the impossible has happened. It is altogether unlikely that S. Thomas could have risen suddenly to so tremendous a height of faith as his words express (see further below), and our Lord's answer seems to imply that his words, though indeed they had not gone beyond the actual truth, had gone far beyond what he then really believed. 'Jesus saith unto him, Because thou hast seen me, hast thou believed?'[1] implying that he had not as yet really gained such faith. It is as though he said, 'Such high faith is not gained through seeing in the way you have seen: those who gain it—who are in the blessed condition—are those that have not seen and yet have

[1] Cf. S. John xvi. 13.

believed.'[1] True steadfastness is not produced by 'miracles,' which, considered as portents, can only strike the mind and force one to accept some fact which he was determined not to believe before. If this was all that S. Thomas had had to stand on, it is quite possible that he might have been in the depths of despair again later on, when the effect of the Easter revelation had worn off. Compare the story of a great Father of the Church who, when he was told that some man was now an enthusiastic believer in the presence of our Lord in the Eucharist, because he had seen the Host in flames, merely said, 'Dear me, why can't he keep his unbelief to himself?'

Our Lord's words do not mean, blessed are the credulous who are ready to believe anything, whether there is sufficient reason for believing it or not, but, blessed are they who are in such a condition that they can receive the truth when it comes to them. It is at least very doubtful whether the truth of our Lord's divinity had as yet come to any of the apostles. Their old belief that he was the Messiah had no doubt revived. That was a great step, but not to be compared at all with the great one towards which it led, though, as we thought before, our Lord saw that the possibility of their receiving the whole truth, when it came, was involved in the confession of His Messiahship. Hence this confession of S. Thomas is very difficult to understand. It seems impossible that he can have said those words out loud in the hearing of the others, and that our Lord accepted them before the rest with no other comment than the words quoted. If such a tremendous thing had happened, the other evangelists must have mentioned it, and there must have been some great disturbance caused by his words. It is far more probable that S. Thomas said them in a whisper to our Lord Himself, or that he told S. John afterwards that that was the moment when the full truth first flashed into his mind—the truth which he afterwards realized and lived by.

But as the words have been so generally taken as a confession of faith in Christ's Godhead, which our Lord

[1] Cf. 1 S. Pet. i. 6–9.

accepted, and the rest acquiesced in, this is probably the place to consider what this belief, which undoubtedly became theirs afterwards, involved to the apostles. This will probably have the effect of making us see that they could not have risen to such a height of faith so suddenly. It ought also to have the effect of making us realize a little more than we do what is involved in the belief about Christ which we confess day by day.

What was involved in the Apostles' Belief that Christ is God.—They were Jews—part of the highest product of the Jewish religion. Hence they were firmly rooted in the belief that JAHVEH was the one only God, the supreme lord of heaven and earth; that it would be blasphemy and sacrilege of the most awful kind to say that anyone else was worthy of divine worship; further, that God is Spirit, of whom no image may be made; that He is perfect in holiness, i.e. infinitely *separate* from all His creatures, dwelling in unapproachable majesty on high. Now try to consider what it meant to them to confess that this Jesus, their Master, whom they had seen with their eyes and beheld and their hands had handled, was Himself this one eternal God. A Hindu is quite ready to believe that Jesus is God, i.e. a god, but then many Hindus would be almost as ready to believe you were also.[1] But for devout, religious Jews of Christ's time like the apostles, it would have been quite impossible to believe that there is any other God but the one eternal, almighty JAHVEH.

If, then, they were ever to believe that Jesus is really no other than He, what must happen? Their whole idea of God must be transformed (the right word is 'fulfilled,' but it meant transformation to them). They had hitherto thought of God as the great being, whose power and awful majesty that of the greatest kings ever known on earth could only point to from an infinite distance. They came to realize that God was the perfect servant, whose humility, patience, and longsuffering were infinitely deeper than that of the most lowly servant ever seen on earth. They came to learn that 'the life,' the eternal life of God, was

[1] Cf. Acts xiv. 11–13.

not what they had supposed, but was *the* life of love, i.e. of one who was willing to go after and serve His loved ones to the uttermost, to take their whole burden of sin on Himself; whose one aim was to make Himself one with His people, whether they were His friends or enemies. Hence at last the fact that Christ suffered Himself to be spit upon, scourged, blasphemed, rejected, crucified as a criminal, which had made it so impossible for them to believe that He was the Messiah, became to them the clearest of all signs that He is the one Eternal God.

But this transformation process must have been a gradual one: human nature cannot bear such a weight of glory all at once. We do not know at what point the apostles came to realize that Christ is God. Perhaps there was no marked point; perhaps some of them did not know that they knew it in this world, though S. John and S. Paul undoubtedly did, as is clear from their writings. These apostles realized what they believed about Christ, and were therefore able to express the tremendous truth. S. Peter, we may suppose, did the same, though he has not given any such marked expression to it as they have. As we try to follow the steps by which Christ led them to this after His Resurrection, it becomes apparent that He won their entire confidence while He remained with them during those forty days, speaking to them of the kingdom of God, and no doubt of how God was winning it. He could show them again and again how the old scriptures had pointed to the sufferings of *God*; to the life of the perfect servant as the highest of all lives. They had their experience of His human life, and could see it to be the highest and most beautiful life imaginable. Then, afterwards, Christ came to them by His Spirit at and after Pentecost and brought them the power to assimilate the truth. Moreover, He had sent them to live the same kind of life of service that He Himself lived. We can imagine, therefore, that as they lived this life and held daily close communion with Christ in heaven, through the power of His Spirit, their whole thought of God was rapidly transformed, and they became able even in this world to receive and assimilate the truth

that Christ's life is the supreme, the perfect one—'the life which was with the Father,'[1] i.e. that Christ is indeed the One Eternal God, become man for our salvation.

As a summary of what S. John believed, let us take 1 S. John i. 1–4. The fact S. John expresses is not, as has been so often supposed, that God, who in His own nature is impassible, took our nature and suffered in it for a short time, and then ascended as man up into the impassible condition in which He eternally is. But the fact he expresses is, that the life which was manifested for that short time in our nature by Christ on earth is the eternal life which God is always living; that the effect man's sin has on God is what we see it had in Christ's human life; that the way Christ entered into men's lives, bore their sins and sorrows, made friends with them, &c., is a manifestation of what God eternally is to all men.

Yet what could the apostles know of the love of God in this life, compared with what they knew after death? What do we realize about it after two thousand years of Christianity? The truth that Christ reveals is that God is perfectly, i.e. infinitely, loving; that there are no depths of lowly service to which He will not descend to save even the most insignificant or the wickedest of His creatures. For remember that what was manifested of God's life in Christ's human one is only what human nature at its highest is capable of assimilating. He who lived and lives Christ's human life is no other than the one eternal God. And because man was made in God's image, human nature is capable of receiving what God's life essentially is, but not the full extent of it—the height and depth of God's love are infinitely greater than can be seen in human nature. Yet Christ enables human nature to reveal God very wonderfully. Think of all the love that is being shown to people all over the world now; consider, for example, that if any little insignificant savage in any part of the world is found, sick and abandoned, any of Christ's disciples, like you Sisters, at once give their whole care and attention to him, as if he were the most important person in the world at the

[1] 1 S. John i. 1, 2.

moment. This shows a great deal of what *God's* love for such a person and for all of us is. For the love Christ's disciples manifest is only a faint spark of what is in God for each one always. Put it thus. God is wrapped up in each one of the myriads of human beings He has created ; every tiny detail of every one life is of the utmost importance to Him ; His love for the worst of them never swerves or alters, however deep in infamy he sinks : God will go after him, be with him in his deeps of sin, go to hell with him, the lowest hell, always trying to get him to turn, always ready to welcome him when he does, however poor his motive for doing so may be. God must be thus seeking and waiting for all the devils in hell ! This is the awful majesty of God ! This is His kingliness ! This is His eternal nature ! And Christ is the *ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης*—the flashing forth of this glory of God,[1] so far as it can be flashed forth in human nature.

The gospel of Christ is the good news that God is this one—that Christ is He ; this is the gospel the apostles were sent to proclaim by their words, and still more by their lives—the gospel which is to win all the world at last.

And this is the love that is facing each one of us now. He—God—is the one Who is always asking us to understand Him better, and to allow Him to enter, Who is always asking each of us to let Him share in all the details of his life : though each of us finds it nevertheless very hard to believe 'God loves me with all his love,' which shows that we do not know much of God yet, compared with what there is to know. Like the apostles, we come to realize God gradually as we hold daily communion with Him through His own Spirit, and live among our fellow men the life that Christ lived.

Thus the faith into which Christ was leading His disciples after Easter implies the belief that He is the one eternal God, living in human nature and manifesting His life—His nature—through it, so far as this is possible ; and it includes complete trust in God as thus manifested. Christ said He had not come in His own name, but solely to manifest

[1] Heb. i. 3.

the Father, to show what the eternal life of God is like; not merely to carry out certain commandments, to do certain things for the Father, but to do in human nature what the Father is eternally doing.[1] Yet human nature can only do a small part of what the Father is doing. Christ desires His disciples to rise to the belief that there is beyond it the unfathomable life of God; that what Christ did and does in human nature, that He, God, is doing with infinite power throughout the universe. Human nature cannot contain all God's life, but in Christ it can and does show us what His life is like. For example, what Christ did to any individual, such as Mary Magdalene or S. Thomas, that God is doing or trying to do to every being in the universe who needs similar manifestations of love, and so with all the rest. The love manifested by Christ to individuals is the love which the infinite God *is*, and which He is always seeking to manifest to all who need Him.

And Christ is leading us all to put our whole trust in the Father whom He manifests: to believe 'God loves me with an infinite love.' God loves everyone also. Everyone is of immense importance and is entirely dear to Him; no one in His sight is insignificant.

It should be a great consolation to us that our Lord was able to lead S. Thomas, the melancholy doubter, as well as all the rest, to this tremendous faith, so that he became the holy saint and apostle, part of the foundations of the whole Catholic Church.

The Revelation to the Disciples at the Sea of Tiberias.—S. John xxi. 1–14.

Jesus, having convinced His disciples in Jerusalem that He had indeed risen from the dead, begins in Galilee to enable them to realize what their life of union with Him in the future is to be and what it may effect.

The main purpose and effect of this revelation was no doubt to help the disciples to pass from the condition in which they had 'known Christ after the flesh' to that in which they would 'know him so no more': in other words, to help them towards the realization that their union with Christ, their friend and master,

[1] See S. John v. 19, 20, &c.

was their union with the one eternal God, the Lord of heaven and earth. (See 2 Cor. v. 16 f. ; S. John xiv. 19–23 ; xvi. 7–16.)

The revelations we have thought of were given to convince the disciples that Jesus had risen indeed, and were all in Jerusalem. They were made necessary by the disciples' want of faith. If the empty grave had been sufficient, our Lord would no doubt have met His disciples again first in Galilee, as He had appointed.[1] The revelations which follow were to teach them about His work in the new society, i.e. about the building up of the Catholic Church, and of their relation to Him and His to them in it. To use S. Luke's words, He had in Jerusalem 'shown himself alive after his passion by many proofs,' and now He proceeds to 'speak of the things concerning the kingdom of God.'[2]

The Condition of Mind of these Seven Disciples.—The eleven disciples had all gone into Galilee, because our Lord had appointed to meet them there. We can understand partly why our Lord had appointed Galilee. All the teaching He had given about His kingdom was connected with Galilee, for He had gone there when He had been rejected at Jerusalem and it had become certain that His Catholic kingdom could not be developed out of the Jewish Church, but must be shown as a new kingdom with a spirit the opposite of the Jewish. But He had not yet appeared again. The fact that there were only seven together shows that some interval had elapsed since His last appearance—they had had time to disperse. These seven seem to have been together, because they came from the same neighbourhood: Peter, Thomas, Nathaniel, James, and John, and two others whose names we do not know. We can imagine a little the state of their mind. They were all sure now that Jesus was risen and with them again. But it must have been a great surprise and shock to them that He was not with them constantly as before. Why had He not gone down with them to Galilee—a triumphant journey in place of the sorrowful one they had had before from Galilee

[1] S. Mark xiv. 28 ; xvi. 7 ; S. Matt. xxviii. 10, 16.
[2] Acts i. 3.

to Jerusalem? No doubt, like Mary Magdalene, they had expected to continue the old intercourse. They must have expected it to be more wonderful now that Jesus, having risen from the dead, must have great new powers for founding His kingdom; but they could have had almost no idea what the kingdom was to be like, or what kind of intercourse theirs was to be with their Lord in future. And it must have been a great shock not to see Him at all! 'Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also come with thee.' It has been supposed that this implies that the faith which had been evoked at Easter had nearly vanished, and they were getting into despair again. There seems no reason to go so far as this: but it may well be that they felt the need very greatly of doing something during this trying time of expectancy; perhaps also they had need to do something for their living. In either case, fishing was the most natural thing for them to do. We must bear in mind the unsatisfied condition of their affections. Jesus had been all to them before His death—such a friend as no one hitherto had ever had or imagined. He had completely won their hearts. We can therefore imagine something of their joy when He Whom they had lost came back to them at Easter, and opened His heart to them just as though they had never been unfaithful to Him. Their hearts must have been thrilling with love for Him. Life without Him must have seemed quite empty of joy. His absence now must therefore have been very hard to bear. The more we think of their relation to Him, the more we see this.

Our Lord's Revelation to them.—He adopted a very strange way of revealing Himself when He did come. He first made Himself known to them, not through their eyes and ears, for they did not recognize His form or voice, but through the work He enabled them to do, which they had not been able to do of themselves (as once before). Even then only S. John understood. The thoughts of the others were no doubt filled with the big haul of fish. But, as on Easter Day at the grave, so now, he first 'saw.' 'It is the Lord.' When Peter heard this, he could not wait any longer.

His action shows how completely our Lord had won his heart: the fear which this same manifestation of power had produced in him before[1] was all gone, though he had still more reason now for saying 'I am a sinful man, O Lord.'

In *vv.* 8–12*a* it is probable that we ought to see mystical meanings. No doubt these incidents, which stamped themselves so indelibly on S. John's memory, did enable the disciples often afterwards to believe in the unseen presence and help of Jesus when they were in great difficulties, and to realize that they were indeed fishers of men, acting under their Lord's inspiration and sustained in their work by Him, and that the net of the Church could hold any number of people. The story does and is meant to help us in the same way. But our main object now is to see what this revelation meant to the disciples then, and how it was a step towards the new condition that was coming. It was evidently an experience quite unlike any they had had before: more strange even than the wonderful Easter ones. For then, when Christ did appear, they knew Him through their senses; though He appeared so strangely, they knew Him in the old way, saw, heard, and touched Him. Now it was not so: see *v.* 12*b*, which implies that they knew it was He otherwise than through their senses. It must have been light by this time (see *v.* 4), and the story implies that they brought the net to where He was on the shore, waiting for them with His invitation 'to break their fast' with the meal He had prepared for them. But so far were they from recognizing Him by their senses that they would have liked to ask 'Who art thou?'; yet they did not dare to do this: it seemed altogether unfitting, for there was something in them which told them it was the Lord—some faculty which had not been used hitherto for perceiving His presence, which did not yet therefore give them the certainty it afterwards gave.

If we use S. Paul's language,[2] we may say they were now in a transition stage between knowing our Lord 'after the flesh,' and knowing Him so no more, but in a higher way. The old way of intercourse with Him, which had

[1] S. Luke v. 8. [2] 2 Cor. v. 16 f.

brought them such great delight, and which even now they must have longed for greatly, was passing away. A new day was dawning, and it is typified beautifully by the picture of our Lord on the shore as 'day was now breaking,' in a mist which prevented them from recognizing Him, but was gradually being dissolved as the sun rose. They had hitherto walked with Him 'by—lower—sight'; henceforth they were to walk 'by faith,' as the Church militant has to walk always, i.e. by spiritual and not carnal sight: and their power for doing this was only beginning, so that nothing was clear. The old was passing away, and the new was coming—but had not yet come.

The New Condition of Union into which our Lord was Leading His Disciples.—This is the place to consider what our Lord meant by His words in S. John xiv. 19 and xvi. 7, 16.

The world and the disciples had hitherto seen Christ 'after the flesh'—had known Him as a human benefactor or friend or teacher. After His Resurrection He was no longer in the world, so that people could know Him after the flesh: hence 'the world' did not see or know Him any more. But the disciples were united with Him in His new risen life, according to His promise.[1] They therefore, though they would no longer see Him in the way they had when they had observed little by little the outward manifestations of His life (by *θεωρία*), could now 'see' Him, i.e. grasp intuitively, by this newly experienced spiritual power, what He was (*ὄψις*); and this, because He had gone to the Father, i.e. because the human had been taken up into the divine so completely that to be in union with Him as man was necessarily to be in union with Him as God.

Our Lord was now preparing His disciples for this new communion with God, made possible to them through His human nature: the communion through which all their old ideas of God were to be transformed, and they were to know Him as He truly is. What a change it was to be! God had hitherto been thought of by the highest of the Jewish race as far off, reigning in isolated majesty; now they were to know Him as their friend—their Jesus. They

[1] S. John xx. 22; cf. xiv. 19.

had hitherto thought of their friend as a man like themselves, though far holier and more powerful: now they were to know Him as their God—the God of Israel—the only God of all the earth. The intimate human friend who had completely won their hearts remained, and lo! He is God! And therefore communion with Him in the future would be of a new kind, and would as greatly transcend their former friendship as heaven transcends earth. For that communion Jesus was preparing them in this revelation, which began on earth and yet reached up into an upper region into which they had never before ascended. It was the beginning of the experience of seeing Him with their eyes no longer, but having Him with them all the days in spirit and in truth.

Further, that they might have the new communion, it was essential that the old should cease. We shall think again of our Lord's words of S. John xvi. 7; but whatever else they mean, they at least imply that so long as men's minds and hearts are filled with the joy of mere human intercourse, it is impossible for them to receive the highest intercourse of all, which is with God in the Spirit. We know even in our experience of fellowship with one another, that, so long as we are wanting only the lower joy of mere human intercourse, we cannot even know what the true intercourse with our friends can be—that which is taken up into and filled with Spirit, with divine love. We can therefore understand, at least in part, why it was expedient for the disciples that He should go away and bring the old intercourse to an end.

We can only faintly imagine what the transition from the old state to the new in their union with Christ meant to the disciples. But we can understand one element in it, for we have known what it is to be in close union with one on earth, and then when he dies to realize that he is with us always now, and that our union with him before was intermittent compared with this. We also have the sense that he knows us much better and therefore can help us more, and that we can trust to his love in a higher way. All this must have been part of the first disciples' experience.

But the highest part of it remains to be thought of. They had been accustomed to rely on Christ's strength and wisdom and love as that of the greatest of their fellow men, and had always felt safe with Him. Now they were being led to realize what at last they 'saw,' that this strength and wisdom and love, which was being given them was that of the infinite, eternal God; that there was no limit to it, no possibility of being separated from it—i.e. from Him; that He enveloped them as the atmosphere and penetrated into their inmost being. And yet He Who was this and did this was their own beloved friend and Lord—Jesus. All the love and life of God, which fills the universe, is that which had been manifested in their Lord, Jesus.

We are to try to mark the steps by which Jesus led His disciples to this realization: and the attempt ought to help us to realize better what the union in which we now live with Jesus, our God, is and implies—that union with our most perfectly intimate and affectionate and loving human friend Jesus, which is our union with the one eternal God. How far do we realize that this is our daily experience? It sounds a strange question. Yet it is certain that the Spirit of Christ—of God—is striving to teach us day by day that our union with Jesus of Nazareth, our friend and lover, is our union with the infinite God, beyond Whom is nothing, in Whom we are potentially saints and safe for ever more, however long and arduous the process may be till we become like Him, when we see Him as He is.

The Revelation to S. Peter given at the same time.—S. John xxi. 15–22.

This revelation was no doubt intended to enable S. Peter, and through him the other disciples, to realize the powerlessness of unaided human nature to attain to a life of union with Christ, the truth about whose person they were beginning to discover. It was, therefore, a direct preparation for the Pentecostal gift of the Spirit.

In considering this passage, I take for granted that S. John, though he wrote the account many years after

the events had happened, is to be relied upon for extreme accuracy in reporting the details, as in the case of the revelation to Mary Magdalene, where it is not difficult to imagine that the whole was permanently imprinted on his memory with all its details. Considering the extraordinary nature of these experiences and S. John's relation to our Lord, it would be wonderful if he had not preserved the details.

Our Lord had just done things which, as the disciples afterwards saw, were acted parables, setting forth the meaning of much of the teaching He had previously given in words; e.g. 'I am the bread of life,' 'Without me ye can do nothing,' 'I will make you to become fishers of men.' And, as we saw, He had been leading them towards the realization that communion with Him is communion with God. Now He proceeds to show S. Peter, the active leader of the rest, what is required in order that they may live in union with Him.

To understand what follows (*vv.* 15–19) and what it was meant to convey, we must bear in mind the distinction between the Greek words *φιλία* (natural affection), and *ἀγάπη* (love which is 'of God'), *φιλέω* and *ἀγαπάω* (the corresponding verbs). The following is an account of the true difference in signification of the two words. (It does not follow that the words are always used in their strict signification.[1] They nearly always are, however, in the New Testament.)

φιλία is love which is the result of sense and emotion, which is therefore of nature, and not the result of an act of will. We do not choose to like or dislike certain people or things: we do so by nature and cannot help it. Hence we are never commanded by God *φιλεῖν* anyone. And remember that this natural affection is in its essence desire for self-satisfaction, and is rather to be considered, therefore, love of self than love of other people or things. To say this is not to disparage it, but to explain it. It was implanted in our nature that our race might be preserved and increased. It says to us, or causes us to say, 'I like him or this thing: therefore I want him or it for myself,

[1] E.g. S. Luke xv. 43, *ἀγαπᾶτε τὴν πρωτοκαθεδρίαν*.

for the filling up of the wants of my nature.' The animals have that which corresponds with it and is for the same purpose. But in man it is also something more. For man was never meant to live in his own kingdom merely, as animals do, but in the kingdom of heaven. This natural affection, therefore, is for man the meeting-place in his nature between him and God; it is the receptacle of the gift of that altogether higher love—Greek *ἀγάπη*—which God is and gives to man, and which is therefore in itself supernatural to man. But natural affection, in itself and apart from the gift of the Spirit, cannot raise man into this kingdom of God, into the communion of saints; it keeps him bound within himself.

'Αγάπη is the love which God is and with which He loves. It is love which in its essence is the desire to give, not to get; it is the giving of self for others. It is love which is altogether a moral virtue, since it depends entirely on the will—the choice of Him who has it. 'Αγάπη in its perfection is God the Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son. It is supernatural to man: it is the power imparted to him by God through Christ; the power by which alone he can rise above his own nature and human life, and become partaker of God's nature and share in His life. And since the exercise of it entirely depends on man's own will, he is commanded to love in this way by God; to love God Himself Whom by nature he cannot attain to; his enemies whom he cannot naturally like, as well as those to whom he is already united by natural affection. It is the love by which man can seek the good of others at whatever cost to himself; the love by which man can rise out of the small life of bondage to self into the fulness and freedom of the unlimited life of God Himself. (This we shall see more fully later on.)

In man *φιλία* and *ἀγάπη* are meant to be always in combination. Φιλία is not to be destroyed and replaced by *ἀγάπη*, but to be fulfilled with it. The unions made through *φιλία* are to be filled with *ἀγάπη*, though the latter can make new unions also which are impossible to *φιλία*. Thus *φιλία* only keeps us bound within our own nature in so far

as it is not filled with *ἀγάπη*. The unions it causes may all be paths by which more of our being rises up into union with the life of God.

Let us now consider *vv.* 15–19. The first question of Jesus (*v.* 15) is 'Simon—you rock-man, as I called you—you on whom I relied so much, on whom I said I could build my Church—do you love me more than all the rest of the disciples do,[1] and do you love me with that highest kind of love, of which I have spoken to you so often?'[2] The title our Lord used must have recalled to S. Peter's mind the times when He had used it before, especially when he had first met Jesus[3] and after his great confession.[4] Such a question might have been asked by an ordinary man merely to sting and hurt. But our Lord can only have meant it as a means of revealing to Peter what he had to trust to, and that what he had merely of his own could not be relied upon. Peter showed by his answer that the appalling discipline he had been through had already had much effect on him. He does not say that he loves Christ more than the others do; nor can he say that he loves Him at all with the highest kind of love which can endure through everything. He can only say, 'I can lay claim to nothing else, but, Lord, thou knowest about my affection for thee.' His nature was crying out for Jesus—he could not do without Him—that he was sure of, and he knew that Jesus was sure of it too. But that was all. He needed Jesus, but this did not mean that he was of any use to Him, or that He could rely on him; this alas! had been shown by his apostasy. Yet Christ knew what Peter did not, that this affection was all he was capable of giving then, and that it was the channel through which the love of God might enter his nature and at last fill it completely. And so He at once gave Peter a commission: 'Feed my lambs,' i.e. 'I trust you to spend yourself for my sake—for the lambs I love.' We can imagine that this new trust must have at once frightened Peter and led him to long for some strength above his own, by which he could be enabled to fulfil this

[1] Cf. S. Matt. xxvi. 31–33.
[2] Cf. S. John xiii. 31–37.
[3] S. John i. 42.
[4] S. Matt. xvi. 17.

trust. Probably it showed him something of the meaning of Christ's promise to give His Spirit to His disciples, when He had gone.

Christ's second question leaves out the comparison between Peter and the rest, and asks merely if he has any love of the highest kind. And when Peter again answers that he has only the natural affection, of which his Lord knows, He gives him another and fuller commission: 'Tend, or shepherd, my sheep'; i.e. because Peter had stood the second test, and still felt he had nothing of his own which could be relied upon, a fuller commission could be given, and it would cause him to long more than ever for new power. We can imagine long pauses between Christ's three questions, and something of the thought in Peter's mind during the intervals.

Christ's third question was a greater test still. As He had in the second omitted the comparison between Peter and the rest, now He omits ἀγαπᾷς με and uses Peter's word, as if to say, 'Have you even any natural affection for me (φιλεῖς με)?' No wonder Peter was 'grieved,' not merely because the three questions recalled so vividly his three denials, but also because of the use now of the lower word for love. It was as though Christ said, 'Yes; it is plain that you have none of the higher love, and therefore that your love cannot be relied on to produce self-sacrifice; but have you really any love at all for me?' The question must have revealed to Peter the depths of his nature, and must have shown him that they were only shallows, and that there was at present nothing in him which could be relied on at all as of use for Christ and His Church. But yet he knew that his nature did cry out for Jesus, in spite of our Lord's last question which seemed to throw doubt on it. Therefore, he could only throw himself on Jesus and say, 'Lord, thou knowest all things and therefore knowest, what would seem impossible to anyone else, that in spite of my utter failure I do love thee as I said.'

We can see that Christ acted as He did, not to hurt Peter, but because this was the surest way of enabling him to realize the truth of which He had spoken to them all in

words and now once more in an acted parable.[1] Christ loved him enough to inflict on him any pain which was necessary that he might learn this. Because he had learnt it, Christ could give him the full commission, the meaning of which was to open out before him gradually as he did his work for Christ.

Then (*vv.* 18, 19) Christ went on to reveal to him the great thing—the entire change that he would experience in the future: i.e. that he who had hitherto gone his own way, guided merely by the impulses of his nature, would live henceforth by the new power of love, by which he could and would give himself to go God's way, in accordance with the inspirations of Christ's Spirit, until at last, like his Lord, he would become obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross! 'When he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me,' i.e. even as far as this. We can imagine Peter, as he heard the words, thinking again of his own of a few days ago, 'Why cannot I follow thee even now? I will lay down my life for thee,' and of what followed; and therefore, realizing that his only hope of obedience to them lay in Christ his Lord, and in the new, unknown power which He would give.

Thus S. Peter, and through him the others, were prepared for their spiritual resurrection—prepared to rise from the life of mere human nature into the life of God!—to rise from the life in which each of them had been held down by and limited to the fulfilling the desires of his own nature, into the limitless life which Christ Himself is living, the life in which each could give himself to others indefinitely, in which he could obey and go on obeying without stopping anywhere Christ's commands 'Feed my lambs—tend my sheep—feed my sheep—follow me.' It was not that S. Peter left the old life completely when he entered the new one. The old Adam is not so quickly overcome. The old tendencies remained and no doubt caused him much trouble. If the legend about his end is true, they were a source of danger to him up to the end. But the centre of his life changed from self to Christ. He had learned that he him-

[1] E.g. S. John xv. 1–7.

self and his own powers, however strong, were in themselves worthless, and was coming to learn that Christ is the only Saviour—the only fulfiller of our nature, the only one who can bring to man the life of God ; that He can and does impart it to all who come to Him in faith ; that therefore nothing is too great or wonderful for man to expect. Such is the way in which our Lord led S. Peter and leads the men of whom he is typical, to desire and so to receive the gift by which they can enter into the life of God.

How our Lord Revealed Himself to S. John.—**S. John's writings show him as a mystic or seer, to whom our Lord's life on earth had brought glimpses of a glory which was beyond his ken, and who was enabled by the Pentecostal gift of the Spirit to see the truth of his being and so to enter into union with Him in the life eternal.**

The following verses, 20–22, though they are part of this same revelation to S. Peter of which we have been thinking, bring before us the contrast between the two men, Peter and John ; the two types they represent, and the different effects of our Lord's revelation upon them. We do not know what prompted S. Peter's question, but we can guess that it was partly affection for S. John ; partly curiosity as to what Christ was going to do to one who was so near to Him ; partly perhaps a sense of superiority, as though Peter, who had been singled out from the rest and given Christ's commission, was in a position to gain favours for his friends. Our Lord's answer seems to contain a rebuke ; and it is not hard to imagine that S. Peter had gone suddenly from extreme humility back into something of his old pride. Our Lord seems to say, ' If I will to honour him above you ; if I desire him to wait on long after your death, because his presence and work are necessary to me ; if I wish him to go by a way which is different from yours, what is that to you ? You have your own work to do, your own call to obey. Obey it ; give yourself to it ; and work on along with the others who may be called to go by your way, remembering that others are called by other ways, and that all are necessary in the one body.'

We have thought how our Lord revealed Himself to Mary Magdalene, the two disciples, S. Thomas and S. Peter; and our review of Christ's methods of revealing Himself to individuals would be incomplete, unless we considered the way by which He led S. John into union with Himself. For this there is a great deal of evidence from S. John's own writings. Study of it will, we can hope, give us deeper insight into the methods by which Christ is revealing Himself to the world in general now, and to ourselves in particular: i.e. how He is gradually building His Church.

Let us think how Christ had been drawing S. John; what His revelation had meant to him, and by what way in contrast with that of S. Peter, he had been led towards union with the life eternal. Bishop Westcott helps us to see this by the distinction he draws between the results of Christ's revelation in the two men. S. Peter's, he says, was the self-sacrifice in which self is *offered*; S. John's that in which self is *forgotten*. Let us try to see how this distinction is gained from a study of S. John's own writings as to the effect of Christ's revelation on him.

He was as full of self as S. Peter, when our Lord first found him. The picture the Gospels give of him is of a young man full of strength and fire and enthusiasm—an athlete in body and in mind, desirous and able to excel in what he undertook. When he had attached himself to Jesus, he was full of eager enthusiasm for His cause; he could not bear the idea that anyone should oppose it; he wanted that fire should be called down on them; he was desirous also of being in the highest place in the new kingdom himself. He was not able, therefore, easily to receive our Lord's teaching about humility and service. Above all, he was not able to stand up for Jesus in the moment of His danger, because of the self-love which mastered him. What had been working against this self-love in him since Jesus first called him? He himself tells us it was the vision of Christ's glory, which began to dawn on him at the beginning of the ministry at Cana, and which gradually opened out before him until it became the source of all his seeing—the vision which filled his whole mind and heart. In his old

age he realized that this was it. 'We beheld his glory,' he says, 'glory as of the only-begotten from the Father,'[1] i.e. glory which was the perfect manifestation of the eternal Father. And he came to see that this glory was the glory of perfect service; of self-giving love, and that *the* life—the one only God *is* love.

This 'glory' began startling him at Cana[2] and went on through all Christ's ministry; it was the light of love trying to pierce and dispel the darkness of his own selfishness. He saw one—his friend and master—giving Himself wholly for others. It slowly dawned upon him that such a life was that of the perfect, the eternal Father, of Whom Jesus spoke so much and Whom He said He had come to manifest. His mighty works were to S. John so many 'signs' of that glory which he knew at last to be the glory of love. It was a new vision such as had never broken on man's sight before—there had only been scattered rays from it hitherto in the world. S. John was in mind and heart a seer, and he beheld it and gazed at it, until it seemed to him the only vision worth gazing at, that in the light of which alone other persons and things could be seen as they are. But the vision and the love for Jesus, which it evoked from him, had not been sufficient before the Resurrection to raise him out of self. He was still there inside, in the old bondage. But what he had seen enabled him to go with Jesus when He was taken,[3] and through it he recovered from his fear sufficiently to stand by the Cross with Mary.[4] He had seen what the rest had not, and therefore also on Easter Day he was able to believe without the further proofs that the rest required.[5] And again here on the lake he first knew it was the Lord, by the sign He had just given. But he does not come forward; he is in the background in all the records of the forty days. It is as though he could not think of himself, but only wanted to gaze at the vision which had come back—at Him in Whom the splendour was, and, most wonderful of all, Who had made him, the self-seeking, faithless John,

[1] S. John i. 14.
[2] *Ibid.* ii. 11.
[3] *Ibid.* xviii. 15.
[4] *Ibid.* xix. 26 f.
[5] *Ibid.* xx. 8.

His friend. What did it mean? Who and what was He? How could he know—how gain the power to see through this darkness? His Master had promised that the Spirit—His own Spirit, and the Spirit of His Father—should come and lead them into all truth. He surely would give him sight, would disperse for him the clouds and let him see! We can imagine that his heart and mind were filled with the wonder of what Jesus had been to him, and that in spite of his unfaithfulness He had committed His mother to his keeping. What love was this that he was gazing at? He must have felt that he was close to some great discovery, and must have looked for the promised gift as the power of spiritual sight which unaided nature cannot attain to. And when the Spirit came and brought the vision, we can well believe that he lost sight of himself more and more, as we lose sight of stars when the sun rises; and felt he must spend his life in helping others to see what he saw—the glory of God's love. The title he gives himself in his old age, 'the disciple whom Jesus loved,' indicates that his whole soul was filled with amazement at the glory of the love which had been given to himself, who was so utterly unworthy of it. (A man who was at all self-conscious could never have called himself by such a title.) And yet he knew that what he saw on earth is as nothing to the full vision which is to break upon us at Christ's coming! 'We shall be like him,' he cries, 'for we shall see him as he is.'[1] Self must be forgotten then altogether.

Thus there is a vivid contrast between S. John and S. Peter. Peter was prepared for the Pentecostal gift by the realization of his own powerlessness to be of use to Christ without it; John by the vision he had dimly seen of the splendour bursting forth from Jesus, which created in him a great longing for some power which would enable him to emerge from the mists and see clearly—to pierce the mystery of His being, from Whom such rays of glory had already come.

We can understand the difference in the effect of Christ's revelation on the two men, which Bishop Westcott describes. S. Peter, in union with Christ after Pentecost, would learn

[1] 1 S. John iii. 1, 2.

to offer every power he had to Christ, that it might be filled with His power; S. John would gradually become less conscious of himself, as his soul was filled with the vision of Christ, and his longing would be not so much to do things as to describe to men what he was constantly gazing at, that they too might see and have fellowship with Jesus.

We can see why our Lord chose a man with S. John's temperament and capacity for seeing spiritual truth to be of the number of his twelve apostles, who had to lead the infant Church to battle against the whole world, which lay in the evil one. Such men are most necessary to the Church in every age; most of all must they have been necessary in that first age—men who are filled with the vision of the love of God, Who has taken up His permanent abode in human nature; who see that love as the all-purifying and all-victorious power; or rather, see Him Who is the eternal love become man and reigning in human nature, with a power which must overcome at last all which is opposed to love. (How greatly such seers are needed in India, and in Europe during this war!)

S. John's first Epistle enables us to understand how Christ revealed Himself to him, and the great importance of the witness of such an one to the Church.

The first chapter shows how difficult he found it to describe what he had seen and was then gazing at. Verses 1, 2 show that there was before him a vision of the eternal, all-embracing life, which had been (partially) manifested, and which he longed to make them see. In *vv.* 3, 4, he at once goes on to show that it is not some abstract, philosophical conception he has before him, but Jesus, his beloved, in Whom the life is and through Whom it is manifested. Fellowship with the life is fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. He writes that they too may know the joy of this fellowship. Then he tries to describe his vision another way. Verse 5: 'This is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light.' He sees the glorious life of God, which he will go on presently to describe as love, as all-embracing light, seeking, as light must, to penetrate everywhere and dispel all dark-

ness. But he at once goes on as before to make plain that it is no mere abstract conception of light he is gazing at, but a personal being, and that fellowship with that light is fellowship with Him. It is He—God living in human nature—Who is light, i.e. the light of the world, as He said He was. To walk in this light is to be raised above sin and to have fellowship one with another. To go on in sin is to shut one's eyes to the light and to live in darkness, though the light is there. And gradually he leads his readers up towards the conception that all true life in the light consists in loving, for—this is his final, complete vision on this side of the grave—God is love! Here is the universal, all-embracing life described anew. He sees the infinite life of God as the eternal pouring forth of God. Love is the essence, the source of all life. But here again love is to him no mere abstract virtue. *Love is* nothing else than the infinite *God loving* and spending Himself in loving. Therefore, He embraces all men everywhere with His love: those who will let Him in become loving—Godlike—His true sons, growing in love, begotten of Him, nourished by Him. And the consummation of man's history is when this vision of God is seen completely, and men, because they see Him, become like Him, so that their whole being, like His, is everlastingly poured out in love.

S. John's writings show clearly that he had the capacity for 'seeing universals,' as philosophers call it; or rather, for seeing Him Who is the universal. In his light he saw all else and therefore saw men and things very clearly; hence, for example, his great attention to and vivid description of details in the Gospel history. Christ appealed to this capacity of his and manifested Himself to him gradually, till he saw Him as the universal love, or loving one, i.e. God. The gift of the Spirit was to him the power to see Christ—God and Man. Through this vision S. John became one with Christ, and knew that thus he had become one with eternal God.

It is very instructive to study the effect of this vision on S. John, especially in view of the temptation which beset most of the great mystics in succeeding ages. He

was ever contemplating the glory of Christ, Who being God *emptied Himself* for the salvation of men. He saw Him in His human nature in heaven living the life of perfect fellowship—union—with God and His fellow men. This life which he had gazed upon on earth and could contemplate in heaven was, he knew, the one perfect life. It would therefore have been impossible for him to cut himself off from the fellowship of men in order to enjoy with rapture the vision of Christ; impossible also for him to think that he could serve God in any higher way than that in which Christ served Him on earth. And therefore he gave himself, as Christ did, to do the Father's will by labouring to bring people into union with Him. See how he pours out his heart to his beloved in his epistles, what pains he takes to win them for Christ. 'That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; yea, and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.' He knows them intimately, lives in such union with them that he knows their goodness and their dangers—the 'little children,' the 'fathers,' the 'young men.'[1] He implores them all again and again to 'love one another.' He tells them they cannot love God unless they do. It is as though he foresaw the temptations that were coming to Christ's disciples to be so entranced by their own enjoyment of the heavenly vision as to forget their fellow men and become unconscious of their needs.

It is both a stimulus and a warning for the Church in every age to realize that S. John, the most loving and beloved of all Christ's disciples, the disciple whose whole heart and mind were filled with the vision of Christ, was inspired by that vision to live the same life of mingled contemplation and active service among his fellow men that Christ Himself lived.

The Revelation to the Eleven, and perhaps to others with them, on 'the mountain' in Galilee, 'where Jesus had appointed them.'—**S. Matt. xxviii. 16–20; cf. [S. Mark] xvi. 15–18 and S. Luke xxiv. 44–49.**

[1] 1 S. John ii. 12–14.

These accounts appear to contain a summary of the teaching which our Lord gave to His apostles as an immediate preparation for His Ascension : teaching as to the meaning of His Ascension, the universal Church which was to result from it, and the permanent union between Himself and the disciples who remain on earth and do His work.

These three passages can be taken together, as containing a summary of our Lord's last messages to His disciples in Galilee up to the day of His Ascension. The passages are in several respects obscure and confusing to us. We do not know when our Lord's words were spoken, whether all at once or at different times. Nor do we know whether they were spoken to the eleven only or to others with them. The accounts in [S. Mark] and S. Luke, taken alone, would imply that they were all spoken on Easter Day, and that the Ascension immediately followed ; but we have seen from other narratives that this was not so, and can see that there is nothing in these two accounts which is inconsistent with the other narratives, or with S. Luke's words in Acts i. 3.

It seems best to examine S. Matthew's account at length, since it obviously contains the essence of our Lord's teaching to the eleven in Galilee, and to consider the other accounts as supplementing it.

S. Matthew implies that it all happened on 'the mountain' in Galilee, 'where Jesus had appointed them.' But it is possible that, as in the case of the 'Sermon on the Mount,' S. Matthew is here including words spoken at other times. This, however, does not matter to us. Again, he says, 'the eleven . . . when they saw him worshipped him, but some doubted.' This seems to imply that others were present besides the eleven, and some have thought that the 'five hundred brethren at once' of whom S. Paul speaks,[1] were present, for it does not seem likely that any of the eleven doubted now. Yet the words spoken by our Lord seem like a last message to the eleven, some of whom may at first have doubted, not that He was risen, but whether He Whom they looked at was Jesus. Or it may have been

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 6.

that many were present, and yet that our Lord's words recorded by S. Matthew were spoken only to the eleven. We cannot be sure either way. We do not know what mountain it was. But it is attractive to suppose that it was the one on which Christ had fed the multitudes, or in the locality which was connected with so many of His mighty works—'the mountain' of S. Matt. v. 1, some spot above the lake.

The words recorded by S. Matthew contain a claim, a commission, and a promise. It seems that our Lord wished to tell His disciples with His own lips before He ascended, the full extent of His power and the consequent truth of His relation to them. Not that they could have understood it then; but afterwards, as the meaning of His words gradually dawned on them, through the wonders which they experienced, it must have made all the difference that He had told them about it before He went away.

(1) *The Claim.*—'All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth.'

Our Lord speaks as though He had already ascended. He describes His Ascension, and the consideration of His words properly belongs to lectures on the Ascension. Let us think now of the extent of the authority which He says is His, and of its nature or character.

'All authority' embraces everything over which rule and dominion can be exercised, and He says 'in heaven and on earth,' i.e. He has supreme authority over the whole created universe! All this has been 'given to' Him as man, and is to be exercised through His human nature. S. Paul tries again and again to express this.[1] But his magnificent language does not go beyond—for that is impossible—the simple statement of our Lord.

Why has our Lord received all this authority in His human nature? God, we are sure, can only give authority in accordance with truth, i.e. to one who has the power to exercise it. 'Place' and authority cannot be given in the kingdom of heaven as mere favours, as in earthly kingdoms. Our Lord has this authority, because He is

[1] See Eph. i. 19–22; Phil. ii. 9–11; Col. i. 16–20.

actually able to exercise, in and through His human nature, divine power over the whole created universe.

The teaching of the New Testament on the subject of the Atonement, which we considered at length, helps us to understand this. The whole created universe, or that part of it which we know about and from which we can learn about the rest, was given by God, we are taught, an independent life of its own. Its freedom was exercised through the rational part of it—through angels and men, so far as we are told about it. But let us think only now of the human race. God gave to man power of free choice, that man might of his own will live in obedience to God, which meant that he could share for ever in God's life of love. But this meant that God could only give man a share in His life so far as man obeyed Him, i.e. was willing to live a life of love. When man refused to do God's will, God's life could no longer flow freely into him. The power which was to have ruled and ordered man's being, and through which man was to have ordered and brought into subjection the lower creation, could no longer be exercised freely, and could only be exercised at all in the human race through the few individuals who were willing more or less to obey God. But these men did possess and could exercise to some extent God's authority ; e.g. Abraham, Moses, Samuel and the prophets. They possessed authority because God could and therefore did impart to them some of the power of His life. They knew to a certain extent and therefore could proclaim God's will. They had power over men—power for good, and power also over the lower creation. Through such men alone could God enter the conscience and heart of the human race. But they were very imperfect, and therefore only had a limited authority. Then came Christ to do the Father's will, as part of the creation, i.e. with a human body and soul. And He did it so perfectly that at last His human will was entirely one with God's. God, therefore, could do in and through Him whatever He wished to do. He could pour into His human nature all the life—the power—the love—which He wished to give to the whole race ; i.e. He could begin and continue

through Him—through His human nature—all the healing work that the race needed, and could gradually fill the race full with His own life. Hence the power and authority which Jesus exercised during His ministry. He taught with authority: He knew God's truth because He was obedient and could therefore proclaim it as one who knew ;[1] He had authority to heal all manner of sickness and disease,[2] to cleanse lepers,[3] to cast out devils,[4] and even to give life to the dead ; He had authority to forgive sins,[5] to execute judgment, to bestow eternal life, to lay down His own life and take it again.[6] And now at last, when He had won the complete victory—had withstood all the temptations that could be brought against Him—had been faithful to the uttermost, God can do whatever He wills for the whole created universe in heaven and earth, and not only for the race of man, through Christ's human nature ; for that has become for him the entrance, always wide open, into the whole creation, which God loves and which He longs to fill with His life. This is the same as saying that Christ in His human nature has been given ' all authority in heaven and on earth.' Whatever work God desires to do now for the existing creation, or will desire to do in the future for future creations, He can do and therefore will do through the human nature of Jesus. Our minds will be able to grasp this, in so far as we keep before them the perfection of the obedience which Christ rendered in our nature, and Who He is who rendered it.

(2) *The Commission to His Disciples.*—' Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations. . . .'

The power and authority which Christ gives to His disciples is the direct consequence of the authority He had received. For His glorified humanity, which had received the fulness of power and authority, had already been ' breathed into ' them as infant life, and was soon to be poured upon them more fully. They and He were one, living one life together. Hence ' as my Father hath sent

[1] S. Matt. vii. 29.
[2] *Ibid.* iv. 23 ; ix. 35.
[3] *Ibid.* viii. 2, 3 ; xi. 5.
[4] *Ibid.* iv. 24 ; viii. 32 ; xii. 22 ; xvii. 18.
[5] *Ibid.* ix. 6.
[6] S. John v. 27 ; xvii. 2 ; x. 18.

me, even so send I you' (see pp. 148–151). He could also say 'as my Father has endowed me, even so I endow you with authority.' Before His death He had only given them a very limited authority—to go to the Jews, and to heal the sick, &c., among them.[1] Now that He has received the plenitude of authority, He says to them, 'Go ye and make disciples of all nations.' The whole human race is committed to their care, and they, i.e. His Church, are not to rest till all have been brought to the Father. (See also [S. Mark] xvi. 15–18; S. Luke xxiv. 44–49.) He had prepared them a little for this universal commission before His death; e.g. S. Mark xiii. 10; S. Matt. xxiv. 14. But nothing but the Ascension, interpreted to them by the Spirit afterwards, could enable them to realize what He meant.

The apostles had this share in Christ's own authority, because they possessed His life. They could do what Christ could do. They were, in fact, the organs through which He was to do His work. They, or He through them, had power and therefore authority to preach God's truth to all men, to cast out devils, to overcome all the power of the evil one, whether manifested through noxious animals or things or through disease; they were even to speak the language of Paradise; they were to proclaim in Christ's name the remission of sins. And our Lord went on to explain that making disciples of all nations meant that they were to be baptized 'into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.' This is not the place to discuss whether our Lord was there prescribing a particular formula for Baptism. The main thing to note is that discipleship in Christ is said to mean being immersed in the divine essence. As Christ Himself gave His life to His first disciples at Easter and Pentecost, so He gave His disciples authority *to give His life to all the rest.* And this was to mean to these others also what it meant for His own human nature—that they were to be altogether immersed in the ocean of the divine love, made one with God.[2]

Then all the new disciples were to be taught to keep the

[1] S. Matt. x. 1–8; S. Luke x. 1–24. [2] See S. John xvii. 20–23.

commandments which Christ Himself gave to His first disciples, which are summed up in the two commandments of love. They are to receive the life of Christ and are to be taught how to use it, as He uses it. For receiving life and making the right use of it are two different things. Just as a man can use well or badly the natural life he received through his parents, or can even waste and destroy it, so it is with the supernatural life men receive through Christ's disciples. Hence the disciples' work is not ended, but only just begun, when they have imparted the new life to others. Our Lord ends with—

(3) *The Promise.*—'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.'

No doubt our Lord said much, of which this is a summary, which caused the disciples to return after His Ascension with great joy, instead of in sorrow as might have been expected. They were to learn afterwards by wonderful experiences what these words meant. And such new experiences would remind them of them, and of all the other teachings of our Lord as to His oneness with His disciples, and would lead them to fuller trust in His ever-present power and love.

Thus our Lord proclaimed in outline with His own lips before He went out of sight the truths of His universal dominion, of the universal Church which was to be the result of it, and of the way in which that Church was gradually to be built up. These truths the Spirit has been expanding and showing to the Church ever since Pentecost, and it seems as though the Church Militant is only just beginning to grasp them. We shall hope to consider them one by one together, trusting to the Spirit to teach us and enable us to teach others a little more of what they mean. (But it must be remembered that the amount of spiritual power and authority which any single disciple who is in union with Christ can receive and exercise is unlimited so far as our Lord is concerned. He must desire to give to each as much as the faith and obedience of the disciple enables him to receive and exercise; the limits are fixed by us, not by Christ.)

We can get even now a general idea of the nature of the sovereignty which Christ says is His, in which He gives His disciples their share. He was really proclaiming the complete triumph of the divine love in human nature: that God now reigned in human nature without hindrance —or, from the other side, that human nature did now in Christ, and therefore could in all who belonged to Him, love with divine love. Now, the divine love is distinct in character from human love; the difference is of kind, not merely of degree. It is the nature of divine love to be unlimited; i.e. it cannot be hindered or turned from its course by anything, and it, or rather he, must give himself without stint to all, whether they will receive him or not. He cannot stop giving himself, and cannot give himself to any in a limited way. He is the eternal act of perfect self-giving.

Man by nature does not love in this way, he seeks self first, which is love of another kind. The whole history of human love and its literature shows it as something which has to be evoked by some beauty which man sees outside himself. He sees it and wants it for himself. This is how he comes to be 'in love with' persons. Till Christ came, the divine love had never been manifested in human nature. Many had loved a great deal, but it had been with a limited kind of love; e.g. even the best of the Jews had never even realized that love could be unlimited—that the Gentiles could be embraced by it even as the Jews. God, we can see, had tried to tell them about it, and one or two of the prophets had come somewhere near to it;[1] but even they had really proclaimed the glory that Israel was to get from all the nations rather than the salvation of the world by means of Israel. The apostles, during our Lord's life, had almost no conception of such a thing; e.g. they desired to call down fire on the Samaritans; they prevented little children from coming to Christ. We can see that even after Pentecost they found it very difficult to believe that Gentiles could be equal to Jews in God's sight.

[1] E.g. Isa. lvi. 6–8; lx.

But Christ loved with this divine love in human nature. There are no signs of any limitations to His love. It is true He worked almost entirely among the Jews, but we know why that was, and that His heart embraced all the Gentiles also.[1] And the Gospels show how He loved all classes of people, and worked for His enemies as well as His friends. It was a new thing. The Jews could not understand it; hence the frequent complaints of the leaders of religion.[2] At last, after loving perfectly with divine love at each stage of His life and in opposition to all temptation, He had made His human nature entirely an instrument of the divine love, so that God can find absolutely free exercise for His love in and through it; or, looked at from the human side, the love with which human nature loves is the divine love now in Christ, and can be in all those who have received His glorified life. Hence when He breathes into His disciples His life, He says to them in effect, 'Love with the divine love, as I do.'

It is no wonder, therefore, that the effects of the apostles' lives were so wonderful. There is no comparison between people who love even very much with human love and those who love with divine love. We have perhaps often wondered why the Saints' lives have such extraordinary effects, and what constitutes a saint. This is the secret. The character of his love is the divine one—the love which cannot be prevented from loving by anything. There are many very good Christians, whose love has not this character: they love to a certain extent and then stop: there are people they do not love; worry, overwork, illness may prevent them from loving. Hence the love with which they love has not the divine character, and its effects are therefore very limited. But when once a person has worked through his temptations, so that he has attained through union with Christ to the divine way of loving, then his life is full of marvels, and is also—whatever troubles and sorrows he may have—one long succession of joyful days.[3] Our Lord and His apostles afterwards

[1] E.g. S. John x. 16. [2] See S. Luke vii. 36–50; xv., &c.
[3] See S. John xv. 9–17.

take it for granted that Christ's disciples can attain to this, for they have been baptized into the love of God. It is the result of Christ's triumph: see our Lord's discourses and His prayer in S. John xiii.–xvii.; and cf. 1 S. John iii., iv.; also S. Paul, in 1 Cor. xiii.; Eph. i.-iii., &c. We can attain to it also, if we aim at it; for example, if we resolve that nothing shall prevent us from loving anyone; that instead of criticising we will love always; instead of being irritable with or tired of tiresome people we will love; enemies as well as friends, those who agree with us and those who do not. This is Christ's character: hence His universal dominion. This is the Church's character: hence it is Catholic in essence. (What a travesty of Catholic love is that of those who 'cannot stand' all the people who do not belong to their party!) This is our character: hence we are saints, at least potentially.[1] For the union between Christ and His Church and every individual member of it is a union as close as that between the vine and its branches, as He said. Thus Christ is 'with us all the days,' as the perpetual source of our new life.

The Last Revelation of the Forty Days.—Acts i. 4–11; S. Luke xxiv. 50–53; [S. Mark] xvi. 19.

This revelation marks the completion of our Lord's preparation of His apostles for the Pentecostal gift, and for the new life and work on which they were about to enter in union with Him, their risen and ascended Lord.

After the appearances in Galilee, our Lord must have directed His apostles to go back to Jerusalem. There He met them for the last time in the old way. It was probably in the same upper chamber and at a meal—the chamber which was already consecrated by His presence, and was the cradle of the infant Church.[2] The Greek word translated 'being assembled together'—*συναλιζόμενος* (v. 4)—probably means 'eating' (R.V. margin). It is very likely that our Lord would have had a last meal with them. Perhaps this is what S. Peter refers to in Acts x. 41. 'He charged them

[1] Cf. 1 S. John iii. 9.

[2] Acts i. 13.

not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father,[1] which, said he, ye heard from me.' Then he explains (v. 5) that the promise is that of the baptism of the Spirit, about which He had taught them before. He compares it with John's baptism, and explains that it means a descent of the Spirit into them analogous to that which they had seen happen to Him at His baptism. To be 'baptized with the Holy Ghost' is to be immersed in the love of God—to be 'baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.'

They needed to be assured again concerning the gift which was coming, for they had received a tremendous commission, and also because they felt that this meeting was the end of the old and beginning of a new and unknown state of things. Perhaps our Lord had told them plainly that it was so. For they asked Him now, 'Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?' i.e. they could only suppose that the glorious promises of the prophets were now to be fulfilled,[2] that the restoration to Israel of the kingdom, which was to usher in the 'restoration of all things,' was to come about. This restoration was to be the manifestation of the glory of the Messiah, and the apostles are really repeating in another form the question they had asked on the Mount of Olives before His death.[3] Our Lord knew they could not yet understand, any more than the prophets could, what the promises meant, and that they could gain little conception as yet of what a kingdom 'not of this world' was like, and so He only answered, 'It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within His own authority.' He had spoken at times about His coming, but His disciples could only understand His words in accordance with the prophecies of the prophets of old, or with the apocalyptic visions of the seers who had succeeded to the prophets since the Restoration from Babylon. The minds of the disciples were not able to assimilate teaching easily, which seemed contrary to all they had been taught as

[1] Cf. S. Luke xxiv. 49.
[2] See, e.g., Joel ii. 28–32; Mal. iii. 1–4; see also Acts iii. 21.
[3] S. Matt. xxiv. 3.

children from scripture and the history of their nation. They could not understand that the coming of the Christ would be a very long, slow process, and that He would have to win His kingdom bit by bit. They could only think of some tremendous catastrophic change, which would alter all things at once. They and the generation which followed them were to learn gradually the meaning of our Lord's teaching about His coming. And therefore our Lord turned their minds from it, and pointed them to the work they had to do. 'But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.' Their minds and hearts were to be concentrated on the present time and work, and not on a future day of coming. Such teaching is necessary in every age: i.e. that the power—bread—given us is for the day; that all our energies have to be concentrated on witnessing for Christ day by day, so that He may 'come' day by day. Christians have been expecting the day of judgment to come at a certain definite date, in most ages. We have known of sensible missionaries in our day in India, who have thought it was not worth while beginning any fresh work or making new plans, because Christ was coming at once.

The apostles were to be Christ's witnesses, because they could say they had seen Him risen. An apostle is in particular one who can say this.[1] But also they were to be witnesses, as Christ's disciples are to be in every age, because they possess and can manifest His life, and so bear witness to the truth as He did.[2] They are to be witnesses that He is still on earth working among men. This witness is to begin in Jerusalem, then go to all Judaea, then to the Samaritans, partly Jews and partly not, and then to the Gentiles everywhere. This was His last message given in the old way. 'And when he had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.' S. Luke in his Gospel is more explicit: 'And he

[1] Acts i. 22; ii. 32; iii. 15; v. 30–32; x. 39–41; xiii. 30, 31; xxii. 15; xxvi. 16; 1 Cor. ix. 1.

[2] S. John xviii. 37.

led them out until they were over against Bethany: and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven.'[1] [S. Mark] makes a further addition: 'So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God.'[2] This bodily Ascension beyond the clouds was to the apostles the outward visible sign of the inward reality, which they could not at that stage have understood without it. (Compare what we thought about the empty tomb and other evidences for the Resurrection, which were meant to convince them then and not us now.) Let us think of it chiefly now as that which completed the preparation which our Lord had given them for the gift of Pentecost, and for the new life and work in union with Him which was to begin then.

Before we pass on to the subject of our Lord's Ascension, let us try to sum up the effect of His training of His apostles up to this time; let us think of how they stood related to Him on the day of His visible Ascension.

(1) Their minds and hearts were filled with Him; so much so that life would have seemed empty and worthless without Him. We have only to think rapidly of what He had been to them since He first called them, to realize that this must have been so. He had long ago brought to them an entirely new idea of life, and had evoked their enthusiasm and affection, so that they had left all and followed Him. We thought of this before, and of the effect His coming back to them at Easter must have had. Then since Easter there had been a far more wonderful intercourse with Him than any they had known before His death. It is difficult to imagine how wonderful it was to them to be talked to and taught by the risen Jesus, Who was filled with the glory of the heavenly life. It must have been as though the time on the Mount of Transfiguration had been repeated again and again during these forty days, but without the sadness or talk of his decease, the fear replaced by the joy of His perfect victory. But even this must have been but a small

[1] S. Luke xxiv. 50 f. [2] [S. Mark] xvi. 19.

part of the joy of their intercourse with Him—a small part of the reason why their minds and hearts were filled by Him. We have probably known many cases, and can imagine the same happening to ourselves, where someone has brought new life, new ideals of life to us—has changed our whole outlook. We can imagine ourselves loving him so much that when he died our whole heart and mind would be filled with him—so much so perhaps that our friends would have to say, ' You must not let it be so ; you must get to work, or you will waste the rest of your life in dreaming and longing for the reunion. That is surely to come. Meanwhile, give yourself to others on earth.' But in the case of the apostles, not only did Jesus fill their minds and hearts, but He had taught them repeatedly that He wished it to be so : that they were to abide in Him, as He in them ; that they could not think of Him too much ; that their whole future life was bound up in His, and that their work would only be fruitful so far as they got all their inspiration and power for it from Him. ' All authority is given me. . . . ' Hence, ' Go ye into all the world.' To keep their minds and hearts filled with Him was to be their life. He was the vine, they were the branches, He had said. This wonderful life He had gone to in heaven was their life, because they were His own and He was theirs. How are we to imagine the intense devotion which these apostles had for Christ, as the result of all this experience and teaching !

(2) There could not have been any fear left in their love for Him : for they had learned by very wonderful experience how He loved them, how He had shown Himself to them after their desertion of Him—after their very bad failure. They must have known that He loved them with a love that nothing could alter. They could be sure that He would be entirely loyal to them, whatever mistakes they made or however often they failed. This is perhaps the most difficult lesson which men have to learn about God's love on earth. Very few of us were even taught to expect such a love from God, when we were young. But Christ taught His apostles this through an unique experience, which has never come to anyone since, because their task was far

greater than that of any of their successors has been. They walked about with, and heard the words and looked into the eyes of, incarnate God, though they were not aware of it. They had known how He bore with His enemies; they had seen over and over again in Him the love which never faileth, and they had had this same love poured out upon themselves, His specially chosen ones, with unlimited warmth of affection, so that, e.g. it would not occur to them that He was patient with them—for being patient with people usually implies bearing with them from a sense of duty—but simply that He was always loving them, under all circumstances and in all their different moods. They did not know indeed whose love they were receiving, as they did afterwards; but the whole history makes us sure that they knew the love which Jesus gave them as love which would never fail or diminish, whatever they did. They were ready then to receive the knowledge which Christ's Spirit would afterwards impart, that the love they were receiving was the love of God, the eternal Father, Son, and Spirit, i.e. the perfect, unlimited love, and that the Spirit they had received was the Spirit which, making them one with Jesus, was that of adoption, by which they cried, 'Abba, Father,' and could live as sons begotten by Him.[1]

(3) Christ had taught them to be receptive of the truth that the union between Himself and them, which was to abide now for ever, was altogether what we speak of as a 'spiritual union,' one which did not depend on contact through bodily senses as before. One great difference between the two kinds of union in this world is that one is perpetual, the other intermittent. We know that the physical union cannot last. This is because it is only a means for gaining the other. The real union between persons is union of spirits. This will include union of bodies in heaven, but on earth we can get to a union which no longer depends on bodily contact, and when we have got to it, we know it as the only real union; e.g. we have experience of this when we are separated in body from those we love either by distance on earth or by their death. This

[1] Cf. 1 S. John iii. 1, 9; iv. 7; v. 1.

Christ had been teaching them since Easter, as we have thought. The whole intercourse of the forty days was of a different kind from that which they had known before. The manner of the appearances, and no doubt His teaching also, showed that He was with them whether they were aware of His presence through their senses or not (cf. his revelation to S. Thomas). This knowledge must have grown on them during the forty days. So that now at the end of them, when He said, ' Lo ! I am with you all the days, even unto the end of the world,' and then vanished out of their sight in a way which was designed to teach them that He had vanished finally, they were ready to receive the truth that He really was with them always, though they could not see Him. It is not likely that they realized on Ascension Day the effect Christ's teaching had had on them. They probably understood the angels to mean that Christ, Who had now gone, would after a few days, when He had made all things ready up above, including their places, come again as He had gone and receive them unto Himself, i.e. take them up above the clouds into the new kingdom which was to restore all things. (All this happened indeed, though in quite other ways from those they had expected.) They could therefore return to Jerusalem with great joy after seeing Him go,[1] though we might have expected great sorrow ; and could wait eagerly for the promised gift, which, when it came, enabled them gradually to realize of what kind their new union with Christ was, and of what nature was the kingdom and their part in it.

Thus our Lord had prepared His apostles to receive and assimilate the gift of His Spirit, and in union with Him to enter on their tremendous task of establishing the Catholic Church in a world of unbelievers. This was the main—almost the sole—effect of all our Lord's teaching of His apostles up to this time. They knew very little of His Resurrection life. The great truths which we are to go on to consider were as yet unknown to them. There is no good reason for supposing that they knew who He was. But they had learnt to trust Him entirely, and to desire His

[1] S. Luke xxiv. 52.

companionship more than anything else. And because of this they could be the foundations on which His Catholic Church could be built up. They, though ordinary people, were about to receive wonderful powers and new knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, which they have been teaching the world ever since ; and the one only condition was that they loved and lived constantly with our Lord.

It is worth while to dwell on this, before we pass on to the doctrine of the Ascension, because there is nothing else in the New Testament or in the history of the Church, which can teach us so vividly as the stories of the forty days, about the attitude towards Himself which our Lord tries always to produce in His disciples—the true attitude of the redeemed towards the Redeemer. He tries to fill their minds and hearts with Himself ; and He acts towards them so that they may know that His love for them is unchangeable and does not depend on what they do or leave undone, so that knowing this they may love Him without fear, i.e. may work for Him not merely because it is their duty, but because they love Him so much that they want to do all they possibly can for Him. A loving son, who lives with and loves his mother with all his heart, does not work for or help her from a sense of duty, but because of his love : so it is with loving married people or friends who love one another truly. We cannot imagine the disciples after Pentecost doing things for Jesus merely from a sense of duty ; we know they did them because of their enthusiastic and grateful love for Him. A sense of duty is admirable in itself and enables men to do great things and to sacrifice themselves for them ; but it is quite possible that in doing them they become hard and censorious, especially with people who are 'not doing their duty.' The whole history of the forty days shows that our Lord was not trying to produce merely a sense of duty in His disciples. He was trying to draw them into the middle of His own heart, that they might feel the warmth of His love, and that their own affections might be kindled by it. A sense of duty could not be sufficient for men who had

to do what they had. Nothing less than a personal union of intense love would be sufficient. Nothing less is sufficient for us. And His desire is that this love for Him may grow and spread in His disciples till they are altogether filled with it, and therefore He draws them by every possible gentle and loving method to desire His constant companionship, and to sustain by prayer that spiritual intercourse through which they can attain a true, real, everlasting union with Him. When they are in this attitude: when their hearts are open to Him and their whole desire is towards Him, then He can come into them, and His Father whom they can know only through Him can come to them, and make His abode with them; show them His mind and purposes, and enable them to fulfil them. They are able to receive whatever He wants to give. They expect Him to make Himself more fully known and to show them what He wants them to do and to be. And this enables Him to come in and do it, just as the opening of the door of a dark room enables the light to come in to dispel the darkness. Hence Christ's loving disciples have found in all ages that wonders happen in their lives, difficulties disappear, miracles are wrought, their prayers are most marvellously answered.

Nor need we suppose that the first disciples were in a more favourable position for attaining this attitude towards our Lord than we are. Such a supposition very frequently quenches or lessens the faith of Christ's disciples about the possibility of union with Him. It is true, as we said, that their opportunity was unique, in that they walked and talked with and looked into the human eyes of incarnate Love: but this was only because their need was unique. They were the first who had to believe that the ascended Christ was with them always, and the daily source of life to them. Christ had established an entirely new relationship between God and man, and they were the first people who had to grasp this and live in it by faith. No wonder they needed an unique preparation. But we can be sure that our Lord did not do more than make it possible for them to rise into the new union. For He wanted them, as

He wants us all, to put forth all our powers of faith, i.e. of loving *trust*. He did for them, we may be sure, no more than was necessary in order that they might put forth their own powers. And He does no more, but no less, for us. We, who have two thousand years of Christian history and of the Ascended Christ's dealings and intercourse with His disciples behind us, do not need what the first disciples did, and therefore do not get it. But it is just as possible for us as it was for them to live in daily communion with Him, the unseen ascended Jesus. And the great value of the stories of the forty days for us is that they show us what our Lord wants to teach us for life in this world—what He makes possible—to what He invites. It is that we may live in daily, hourly communion with Him, our loving and beloved Lord, just as if we could see Him walking about and sitting or kneeling with us, and could hear Him speaking and could touch Him. This is the one thing He sees to be necessary for us.[1] If we do this, nothing else matters, for then He will be able to fulfil His will in and through us. And this life of constant friendship with Jesus is 'the life of prayer,' 'the mystical life.' But it is also the ordinary life for every one of us—the life to which every Sister is called, and which it is possible for her to live. It is not made easy, for God wants us to put forth all our powers—to love Him with all our heart and soul and mind and strength. But we have the experience of all the saints to show us that Jesus is really with us all the days; and when we act on their experience and seek His friendship, then we know by our own experience that He is there, and is to us all that He has promised to be to those who love and seek Him.

[1] S. John xv. 7–16.

The Ascension

The Ascension of Christ.—'He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty' (Apostles' Creed). 'And ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father' (Nicene Creed). 'He ascended into heaven, he sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty' (Athanasian Creed).

The Ascension of Christ, as it is set before us in the New Testament, is His exaltation in our human nature above all other created natures to the right hand of God, i.e. to the highest condition of union with God to which a created nature can attain. [S. Mark] xvi. 19 ; Rom. viii. 34 ; Eph. i. 19–23 ; iv. 10 ; Phil. ii. 9–11 ; Col. i. 15–20 ; Heb. i. 3 ; viii. 1 ; x. 12 ; xii. 2 ; 1 S. Peter iii. 22 ; Acts iii. 32, 33 ; Rev. iii. 21.

This union is so perfect that He can be said to possess as man the fulness of the Godhead. Col. i. 19 ; ii. 9 ; cf. S. John i. 16.

The visible ascent of His body beyond the clouds was only the outward sign suited to the capacity of His first disciples, of the taking of His whole manhood into God. Acts i. 9 ; S. Luke xxiv. 51 ; [S. Mark] xvi. 19.

We leave now the consideration of how our Lord manifested Himself in His new life to the first disciples during Eastertide, and pass on to consider what Christ's present human life is—that human life which is perfect in heaven and can never change any more. The knowledge we can gain of it here is as nothing compared with that which we hope to possess hereafter when we 'see him as he is.' Yet we can know a great deal about it even on earth. There is much teaching about it in the New Testament, and the history of the Church is unfolding more of its meaning in each age. As in the case of all other truths of theology we are to strive to know more and are to believe that God is trying to teach us more, and are never to be content to

say 'this is beyond me,' till we have done our best to arrive at the understanding of it: so is it in the case of our Lord's present human life in heaven. He wants to tell us about it; He gives His Spirit that we may learn. Further, Christ's present human life is to be the centre of all our striving after knowledge, the source from which all our knowledge comes both of God and man and of the relationship between them. And this knowledge is that of the heart as well as the mind. For Jesus Christ is He in whom all the affections of our heart are to centre; from whom comes all the power we can gain from loving God or our fellow men.

He remains invisible as a rule (only occasionally manifesting Himself visibly when there is special need), in order, no doubt, that He may evoke from us the greatest efforts we can make with our minds and hearts, to know and love Him. We are not to expect visions; He wants us to live by faith. (Read Ephes. i. 15–23; iii. 14–19; Gal. ii. 20; Phil. iii. 7–14; Col. iii. 1–4.)

The Outward Sign of Christ's Ascension.—People often wonder at or criticise this, on the ground that it is based on suppositions which we now know to be false. But we ought not to be surprised or to complain, because God teaches men 'line upon line . . . here a little, there a little,' as they are able to bear it. An outward sign which is meant to teach any spiritual truth must be one that is understood by those who see it. God teaches men through the knowledge and according to the capacity they have, because we can only learn in this way. The first disciples thought the earth was anchored immovably in the lower waters, that a circular firmament was above the earth, and that up beyond it was heaven. And Christ wished to teach them that He had gone into heaven. It was essential that they should know this. What heaven is they and the rest of mankind were to learn gradually afterwards. We are learning slowly; our conceptions of it, though no doubt an improvement on their early ones, are still very crude. Probably the only way in which the

truth could have been brought home to the first disciples, that our Lord in His human nature had gone into the heavenly life, was a visible going up of His body such as they saw. Even we now, who know that heaven is not a place but a condition of life, and who know that up in the air might as correctly be called down, yet think of heaven as 'up,' and are much helped by lifting our eyes as well as our hearts 'up' when we pray.

The cause of His exaltation was, as we have considered, the perfect obedience which He rendered through His human will to the Father. On account of this obedience, He became in His human nature the perfect Son that He is eternally in the divine nature, and could therefore receive all that the Father desired to give Him (see Phil. ii. 5–11).

He could and therefore did receive in His human nature the glory which He had with the Father before the world was (S. John xvii. 1, 4, 5 ; cf. xii. 23, 28 ; xiii. 31, 32 ; and Heb. i. 3).

In Him, therefore, is manifested God's supreme purpose for the creation. The man Christ Jesus, exalted and glorified in heaven, is a new being, the summit in relation to whom all the other orders of created beings appear as steps of a great ascent, and from whom new life flows by which all the rest of God's creation is gradually to be made new and perfected. (2 Cor. v. 16-19 ; Eph. i. 22 ; iv. 20–24 ; Col. i. 19 ; ii. 9 ; iii. 1–3, 9–11 ; Gal. vi. 14, 15 ; Rev. xxi. 1–5 ; Phil. iii. 20–21 ; 1 Cor. xv. 22–28 ; Heb. ii. 6–9 ; 1 S. John iii. 1, 2, 9 ; iv. 7–17 ; v. ; cf. S. Matt. xxviii. 18, 19.

For the session of Jesus Christ at the right hand of God means that He abides unchangeably God and man, and that His human nature now shares eternally in His divine life of Sonship. (Heb. vii. 15–28, &c. ; Rom. vi. 8–10 ; Rev. i. 18 ; v. 11–14.)

Notes.—2 Cor. v. 16–19. 'We henceforth know no man according to the flesh,' i.e. judge of no man by what he is merely as man : 'even though we have known Christ after the flesh'—though we used to judge of Him according to His standing in this world as Jesus of Nazareth, 'yet now we know him so no more,' i.e. we know Him now only as He has been revealed to us from heaven (cf. Rom. i. 1–4). 'Wherefore if any man is in Christ,' i.e. is a partaker of His Resurrection life, 'he is a new creature,' or 'there is a new creation' (*καινὴ κτίσις*) : 'the old things are passed away ; behold, they are become new.'

Gal. vi. 14, 15 ; Col. iii. 1–3 ; cf. 9–11.—These passages proclaim that Christians have died to an old life and risen to the new one, and that their resurrection is as real as His—is, in fact, a part of His. And this new life is being poured from on high till the whole race has received and been made new by it.

1 Cor. xv. 22–28 ; Heb. ii. 6–9.—We see not yet the whole new creation, but we see Jesus crowned, the source and pledge of it all.

1 S. John iii. 1, 2, 9 ; iv. 7–17 ; v.—These passages contain the same teaching, that Christians are begotten of God, given a new life—His own—which we can live with Him now even in this world.

Cf. S. John xiv. 19, 20 ; xv., xvii. *pass.*

Christ's Spiritual Exaltation.—To think in the right way of Christ's exaltation above all creatures, we must consider again its cause. Christ with His human will did the Father's will perfectly. Therefore, the Father's will for Him could be and was accomplished. From the moment of the Incarnation there was such a union between God and His human nature that God's life could become its life, so far as His human will chose to do God's. But His human nature had to increase in the possession of God's life step by step, solely through the exercise of His human will. All through His struggle His obedience was always becoming more perfect, and therefore God's life more completely the life of His human nature. At last—at the end on the cross, His human obedience had become perfect—He could not be more obedient—and therefore God could pour into His human soul all that He willed to give. But He wills always to give His whole being. He gave Himself, therefore, and Christ's whole human nature received Him, so that the life by which He lived as man was at last nothing but divine life. As S. Paul could say, ' I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me ' ; so Christ's human soul could say, ' I live a human life, yet I do not, for God liveth in me : I have no life but his.' Henceforth and for ever God's life and Christ's human life are one life only—the life of Him who gives Himself wholly without any reservation

of any kind. God is love, and the man Christ Jesus is love. This S. Paul expresses in the passages quoted, but especially in Col. i. 19 and ii. 9. But this could not be said of any other created spirit than Christ's human spirit, for no other is God's own in the same sense.

Therefore, when once Christ's human obedience was complete, He in His human nature was necessarily exalted above all creatures. His exaltation could not stop short of God's right hand—God's own throne. The glory of the divine Sonship—of being eternally begotten of the Father—which is our Lord's in the Blessed Trinity, that glory He has also now and for ever in His human nature. This truth He wants us to dwell on and try to grasp as it is: and we are not to be disturbed or checked in this quest by the other truth that in Christ the two natures are distinct—the divine uncreated nature and the human created one. The one is not the other, though the life of both is the same. In order to think of this, we must try to rid our minds of conceptions of physical magnitude or values, for we are engaged on conceptions of spiritual values. God is not, e.g. infinitely great in magnitude, so that He cannot be contained in a created nature. He is 'incomprehensible' (Athan. Creed) in the sense that there is no limit whatever to the power and extent of His love.

The same kind of difficulty meets us here as that which we dwelt upon when we were thinking of the truth of the Incarnation. It is the difficulty which has caused some orthodox theologians to say that God could not become man without surrendering some of His attributes, i.e. becoming 'within the sphere of the Incarnation' something less than God. If that only meant that God and man have different natures, it would be true; but it means that God cannot compress Himself within the limits of human nature—cannot really live man's life. So here, it is said the Man Christ Jesus in heaven cannot really live God's life, for that is infinite—and man's nature is for ever finite, however glorified; and therefore the two lives must be for ever 'immensely' distinct.

These difficulties exist because it is habitual with us

in this life to think in terms of time and space. We are, however, dealing with the eternal life,[1] which is life wholly independent of time and space. And the way of escape from the difficulty is here, as in the other case, the truth 'God is love.' This enables us to substitute for the heathen idea 'God is infinite' the Christian equivalent 'God is perfect': i.e. for a term which contains a physical suggestion—God is infinite in size or power—to substitute a term which contains only a moral or spiritual idea—God is perfect in love; He loves always with all His being; nothing can divert Him from loving; it is His nature to love without limit—to give Himself without any reservation. This enables our mind to take a new direction. We can think of the power of love to unite people, however different they are at first, and enable them to live one life of love together. We can grasp what our Lord meant when He prayed that we and God might be one 'that they all may be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us; . . . And the glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one.'[2] The truth that God and man can live one and the same life together could not be expressed more plainly or more forcibly. Observe that our Lord is not praying merely for a unity of believers *inter se*, which can be compared with or considered as the counterpart of the unity of the persons in the Blessed Trinity. He prays that all His members may actually share for ever in the unity of the Blessed Trinity: 'I in them and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one.' The Father is in Him, Jesus, because He loves His Son, i.e. gives Himself wholly to Him—loves Him with the whole power of His perfect being. And Jesus loves His Father with this same perfect love, i.e. gives Himself to the Father with the whole power of His being. Therefore they are one: they live the same life together—the life of perfect love, which gives all and keeps nothing back. The further truth we are now considering is that Jesus loves the Father in His

[1] 1 S. John i. 2. [2] S. John xvii. 20–23.

human nature with the same love; He gives all He is and has, as man, to His Father without any reservation whatever: therefore in Him God and man are one—*they* live the same life together, the life of perfect love, which gives all and keeps nothing back. Love has united the two natures, the divine and the human, and causes them to live one life —'*the* life which was (eternally) with the Father and was manifested to us' (in Jesus Christ). Christ's prayer was that not only He but all His members might at last be one, by living this same life of perfect love—the divine life—together.

When we think of ourselves and of the way we love: of the half-hearted love we give and of how much we keep back for ourselves, it seems unimaginable that we can ever live a life in which we give all as God does. Even the greatest saints, who sometimes seem to have approached wonderfully near to this, think and say of themselves that such a life seems altogether out of their reach. This is because they through much prayer have come to realize far more what the love of Jesus is than ordinary Christians do. And they are right. The love of God, which is also the love of the man Christ Jesus and His perfected saints, is above the love of even the best people on earth, at a height which is for us now immeasurable. But here the truth of Christ's Ascension comes to our aid, and tells us we are not to think of ourselves, or to measure man's possibilities by what we see or know on earth, but are to look up to Jesus glorified in heaven, and to see in Him the hope of glory for our whole race.

Let us go on now, therefore, to think of *the ascended Jesus as the summit and goal of all creation.*

Think of the different orders of creation, as we know them, and of how each seems to have been evolved from a lower. Begin from the gaseous condition in which our planet once was. Out of it minerals emerged in time. Then came vegetables, with a life different from and higher than that of minerals. (It seems best, in view of modern discoveries, to speak of minerals as having some kind of life, instead of being lifeless as we used to call them.)

Animals also emerged with feelings and intelligence and freedom of movement, which shows that they have a life of a new and much higher kind than that of vegetables. Then out of them at last came man, made with a life so much higher than that of even the highest animals that he can only be described as made in the image of God—he has power to choose, to initiate, to create, to love. Man is such a great being that he was made not to find his fulness in his own kingdom, but in God's; made so that he could live by the life of God Himself, i.e. not possessing it by nature, but capable of reaching out and receiving it from God, making it His own and living by it. But observe, man living merely his own human life and man living God's life are as two different beings. There is an immeasurable distance between them. Jesus exalted in heaven is man living God's life perfectly. He is a new being.[1] He is exalted so far above man who is not living God's life that the two cannot be compared; just as men living mere human lives are incomparably exalted above the animals, as animals are above vegetables. Not only so, but, because he who lives God's life in man's nature is no other than God Himself, the new man, Christ Jesus, is the head of the whole creation, and not only of that part about which we know.[2] And we must remember that in the case of this highest order of creation, as in those of lower orders, we can form no conception of the powers and possibilities of the new man, i.e. man living God's life, from our experience of those of the old man, i.e. man living merely his own life.

If we had only had experience of the mineral world, we could never have imagined that vegetables, flowers, &c., with all their varied life and beauty, could have come out of it; and so on with the other orders up to man. In the same way, no one could predict what man in Christ could be and do from his experience of man without Christ. To take an illustration from the animal kingdom; the ordinary life of man is as different from the life of man in the risen, ascended Christ, as the life of a caterpillar is

[1] See references above, 2 Cor. v. 16–19, &c. [2] See pp. 201 ff.

from that of the butterfly into which it emerges. Suppose that we had made friends with a caterpillar, without knowing anything about his future possibilities, and had lost sight of him for a time; and then one came and told us, 'your old friend is flying about in the air, and has a very beautiful body with big wings.' We should say, 'nonsense, I can't believe it. My friend had many legs, I know, and used to go about on the ground at what he thought a great pace, but it is quite impossible for him to fly—miracles do not happen.' But when we had further evidence and experience, we should know that one part of God's plan for His creation was that a caterpillar should die to his old life and then emerge into that of a butterfly; and then what seemed a miracle would not be thought of as such any longer. In like manner, when the report comes of Christ's Resurrection and Ascension, many people say, 'we can't believe it; man can't do that kind of thing, and miracles do not happen—it is against God's established order of nature.' They are to learn from further evidence and experience, and from their own ventures of faith, that a new thing happened at the Incarnation, and that when Christ rose from the dead a new being and order of being had been perfected, new, that is, not as being other than man—the risen Christ is truly man—but man risen into a new life, man made new. The 'new man' is as truly 'a new creation' as the first man was when he emerged, at any rate as to his body, from the highest order of animals. Of him it was impossible to say, from any previous experience of man, what he could do—what powers he might have of body or mind or spirit. To know this we have to watch and see what powers he does actually put forth.

When once we realize that Christ's life is of a different order from any human life ever seen before—the life of one who has never sinned, or given way to any even the least selfishness, but who habitually lived a life of love, of self-giving, in human nature, till he had brought it into such a condition that all its powers of body, mind and spirit were nothing but instruments of the divine life or

love that God is : then nothing that has ever been reported about Him can seem too wonderful. All that is taught us about His Resurrection, Ascension, Session at the right hand of God, and of the wonderful power He has over all who live in communion with Him, do not appear to be miracles any more, but rather natural results of what He is. We realize that we are brought face to face with the greatest of God's plans for creation. We see, though only dimly here, the final goal of all creation, for we see one in a created nature living the life of God. And then, from the knowledge of Christ we have already arrived at, God asks us to make continually more and higher ventures of faith, that we may discover step by step what Christ's life is, and what he can enable us and the rest of men to attain to. Our hope for ourselves and all other people is to be based, not on what man has done or attempts to do here, but on Christ seated in our nature at the right hand of God. As we fix our gaze on Him, we can be sure that all we have hoped or thought or dreamed of good is only a very faint indication of what is possible for man—of what is actually waiting for him in Christ. We see not yet what we can be, but we see Jesus in heaven, and seeing Him we know that man can, because man does, live God's own life !

If we want to know the meaning and possibilities of a caterpillar, we must look not at a caterpillar crawling on the ground, but at a butterfly flying in the upper air. So if we want to know the meaning and possibilities of man, we must look not at man as he is seen on the earth, but at the new man, Christ Jesus, the head of the race in heaven. When we look at man as he is now on earth, we see large sections of the race reverting to the savage type in character, given over to greed and lust and hatred and fighting. We see that, even when there has been a very great development of man's natural powers, which have issued in wonderful inventions, he is not necessarily in character above the savage. But yet even on earth we see many signs of his divinity, even in the midst of war, manifested in beautiful devotion and self-sacrifice. And we can look up above

all that man has attained to on earth in the way of love, to man in the next world being purified, sloughing off his selfishness and increasing wonderfully in love; then still on and up to the saints in heaven; and as we rise thus in thought, the light which is streaming from above is always getting stronger and more dazzling. It points us up higher than our minds can reach, to its source—to Him with whom our hearts can hold close communion whenever we will—to Christ Jesus glorified—man actually living God's life, perfect in love: one with God: divine! (How else can we describe His condition?) And there at last we see what man was meant for: what he can actually become. Jesus, our God and brother, is therefore to be the centre and inspiration of all our ventures of faith on behalf of man—those great ventures which God asks of us, and through which we and those for whom we pray can become what Christ's manhood has become—one with God.

For remember, God has taught us about the exaltation of Christ in our nature mainly that we may make great ventures of faith for our fellow men, and so enable Him to fulfil more quickly the one great desire of His heart which He has revealed to us, viz. that the whole race may share in the divine life for ever. He is love, and His human heart is filled with this divine yearning that men shall possess His life. Hence, when He asks us to think of Him as the summit and goal of creation, as the head of our race, the second Adam, it is that we may realize what is possible for the rest of men, and pray and work for them with the tremendous faith, based on this truth, which removes mountains and overcomes the world. See how He taught His apostles this, and how eagerly they handed on His teaching in the passages quoted above.[1] These are some selections from the New Testament, in which special stress is laid on the truth which is taught by the Bible as a whole, that Christ is the summit of God's creation, the new man, who is begetting the whole race anew, to whom therefore we all are to look as the source of new life, the powers and

[1] Pp. 201–2.

possibilities of which we are only beginning to discover. The remainder of Christian doctrine is almost entirely concerned with the relation of the new man, Christ Jesus, exalted in heaven, to the rest of the race, and with the methods by which He works to impart His life to all men.

The relation of the ascended Christ to the rest of mankind, and His unceasing work for man at God's right hand, are set forth at length in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in which our Lord in heaven is described as the great High Priest of our race, who ministers to God on our behalf, and through whose priestly work all men have access to God and can live in union with Him. Heb., especially v.–x. 18 ; cf. Rev. i. 9–18.

The same truth is expressed by S. Paul, in 1 Tim. ii. 5 ; 'there is one God, one mediator also between God and men, (himself) man, Christ Jesus' (cf. Rom. viii. 34) ; and by S. John, in 1 S. John ii. 1 : 'if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.'

True Priesthood

Before we examine in detail the passages in Hebrews in which Christ's priestly work for man is described, we ought to consider (1) what is the true, i.e. the Christian, meaning of priesthood and sacrifice, as contrasted with (2) the Jewish habits of thought on the subject, which the Epistle tries to correct, and which account for the manner in which the truth of Christ's priesthood is presented in this Epistle. Another way of putting this distinction is that it is the distinction between the kind of priestly or mediatorial work that man *needs*, and the kind that fallen, selfish man usually *desires*.

It will be well to consider this matter at length, for it is not too much to say that the practice of true religion depends upon taking and acting upon the true view of this matter.

(1) *The true, i.e. the Christian, meaning of priesthood.* —The word used in the Epistle to the Hebrews, ἱερεύς, has always meant in Greek a man who is busied with sacred rites, or the things of God. The highest priestly work, as

God has revealed it to us, is that of one who works to unite God with man and man with God. A true priest is a mediator between God and man for this purpose. The definition of the Catechism of the Council of Trent can be accepted as a true one: [a priest is] 'a mediator and representative between God and man, which is to be reckoned the principal function of priesthood' ('Cat. ad Paroch.' ii. 7, Qu. 24). This is the true notion, the distortion of which we shall have to consider later.

Now observe that man needs such priestly work, such a mediator, not merely because he is a sinner, but because he is man. He is made in God's image, that he may live not merely a human, but the divine life, as we have seen. But by his own human power he never can or could have done this. As well might a vegetable try to live the life of an animal, or an animal try to live man's life. Hence, even if he had never fallen, he would have needed someone who possessed the life of God and man to unite him with God. To live in the union with God, in which Christians can live now, he would have needed just as he does now that Christ should become incarnate. When our Lord says, 'apart from me ye can do nothing,'[1] He is speaking of man as man, not only as a sinner. Without Christ man could never have done anything in the kingdom of heaven, could never have exercised any of the functions of the divine life. Christ alone is the true vine, in which man, as man, must abide, if he is to be in union with God.

God's purpose for man must be as unchanging as His love for man: in fact, the two are one; for God's love for man is nothing else than His desire that man should possess His life and live it for ever, and the consequent giving of Himself to man. Hence, if man had never fallen, we can be sure that God would have given Himself to him as completely as He has, and would have enabled him to give himself completely to God. And observe that the process by which man accepted and used and so made his own the life of God would have been just the same as at present. Christ could not have united God with man apart from

[1] S. John xv. 5.

man's will. He could but have become man Himself, then offered His divine-human life to each man as He does now, and man would have had to accept it and make it his own by a succession of acts of will, by which he chose to and refused the temptation to live any other kind of life, till he lived by it completely. The marvel is that all this purpose of God can be and is being carried out, in spite of man's opposition to it.

The result of the Fall was that God's mediatorial work could not be done without appalling suffering, so that the work of the true priest was henceforth necessarily connected with painful sacrifice. But there is no essential connection between priestly work and what we now understand by 'sacrifice.' We can, if we like, restrict the meaning of the word 'sacrifice' to sacrifice which is painful. If we do, we must remember that the essential meaning of it is the giving of God's life to man and of man's to God, which giving would, apart from the Fall, have been unalloyed joy on both sides. The image given in the Bible is that of the glad giving of a husband and wife, each to the other. 'Sacrifice,' therefore, in its essence is another word for 'love.'[1]

The Fall has not changed God's original purpose, but has made it far more difficult of accomplishment. God's gift of Himself to fallen man in the Incarnation involved the Passion of Christ: man's gift of himself to God also involves much painful sacrifice. And as man would always have needed Christ to enable him to give himself to God and live God's life, so now he needs Christ, Who has borne and conquered his sin and can impart to him the life which has conquered it, so that he too may conquer, i.e. may overcome all the difficulties which sin has put in the way of his offering himself to God in loving, wholehearted sacrifice. The process by which he accepts Christ's life and makes it his own by deliberately living it is the same as it would have been if he had not sinned: he does it by repeated acts of will, by which he gradually denies his own will and does God's, until he has come to a

[1] See Moberly, *Ministerial Priesthood*, pp. 243–8.

condition in which he has quite conquered all possible temptations and does nothing but God's will—lives no life but God's. Hence the true work of Christ as man's High Priest, or mediator, is to enable man to give himself to God perfectly, not merely to do something instead of man. This is also the work of all those who have been called to a special share in Christ's priesthood. They too are mediators between God and man—men specially appointed by God to enable other people to give themselves to God and live His life: this His priests do by bringing to them the life of Christ, both through sacraments and through their own lives, which ought to be Christ-like. No priest can be considered a true one, merely because he administers the sacraments. There must be in him the persuasive power of Christ's life, which helps people to assimilate and live by the grace of the sacraments. Hence the emphasis laid on pastoral work and character in our Ordinal. The whole Church of Christ is a priestly body, or a kingdom of priests, because its true function is to bring the life of Christ to the whole world, that all men may live by it.[1] The important point to observe is that the work of a true priest or mediator, sent by God on behalf of man, is not to do things or live a life instead of the men to whom he is sent, but to enable them to live the life of God of their own wills, i.e. to be and to do what God eternally wished them to be and do. The true advocate of men is he who pleads for him, because he can enable him to be holy.

(2) *The distorted view of priesthood, which sinful selfish, man is always eager to accept.*—Sinful man is selfish and slack, and he naturally desires to have things done for him, so that he himself need not do them. Therefore he desires the kind of priest who can and will offer sacrifices for him, which will do instead of the sacrifice of himself.

The religious history of man seems to show that men of all races and times, almost without exception, have had the idea that they cannot get to God, or to heaven, or whatever they consider the desirable after-condition, without sacrifice. It is a wonderful illustration of the truth that

[1] 1 S. Peter ii. 5, 9; Rev. i. 5, 6; v. 9, 10; xx. 4, 6.

Christ is 'the light which lighteth every man.'[1] But though they desire to be happy hereafter, they desire also to get as much enjoyment as they can out of this world. Therefore they eagerly grasp at a system of religion which assures them that there are priests, or mediators, or advocates, who can make it all right for them; who can offer sacrifices or mediation, through which the consequences of their sins will be annulled, so that they can go on in their sin or slackness quite happily.

An illustration from ordinary life at this point may help to make clear the difference between true and false mediation. From time to time a steamer clerk, who has been turned out for cheating, comes to me and asks me to intercede for him with the head Sahib. I do not know anything of him, except that I have seen him occasionally on steamers; but he thinks I am a friend of the Sahib and probably 'a kind gentleman.' Suppose I become a mediator or advocate for him, and go to his employer and ask him to take him on again. His employer says to me, 'I have to protect the Company; can you give me any guarantee that the man won't do the same again?' I have to answer, 'No, I can't; in fact, I think it almost certain that he will, as soon as the fear of this scare has passed off.' Then his employer ought to refuse my request. To grant it would do harm to the Company and to the man, and to me. My mediation was of a false kind and ought to fail. But it is the kind that people ask for all over India.

But now suppose that the man I plead for is my own son, or as my own son, and I can say, 'I know this boy through and through. I know his temptation was very strong and sudden; I am going to keep him with me at home, and I can guarantee that he won't do such a thing again, but will on account of your clemency serve you faithfully.' Then the master could rightly say, 'Very well; I'll give him another chance; he must be severely punished for the sake of others, but I'll take him on again.'

[1] S. John i. 9.

A good illustration of this latter kind of mediation is in 'Old Fireproof'; a novel the hero of which was an officer, who in the Boer War was wont to intercede for men who had behaved like cowards, because he knew how to give them another trial and enable them to behave like men. But if, without having this power over them, he had interceded for them, he might have done great harm to the whole army.

Thus, while the work of a true priest for sinners is that of one who has an offering to make on their behalf, through which they can actually become good, the false, distorted notion that sinners have is that a priest is one who can offer something to make things right, although no real change takes place in them, the sinners.

This false idea is very deeply rooted in human nature, and we must not think we are in no danger from it. There have always been, so far as history goes back, systems of religion all over the world which provided such false mediation and priesthood. We are very familiar with such a system in Hinduism, which is mainly now, in the popular estimation, a vast system for appeasing gods or devils, and enabling men to do as they like without suffering for it. Sacrifices are offered, which are thought to do instead of the offering of the man's self. The great Jewish system of sacrifices became in the popular estimation a system of precisely the same kind, in spite of the efforts of seers and prophets to uphold the true idea. The Epistle to the Hebrews says truly that under the Jewish system 'gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot, as touching the conscience, make the worshipper perfect, being only . . . carnal ordinances,'[1] and 'it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins.'[2] But the ordinary Jewish opinion was that the sacrifices *per se* did all that was necessary in respect of the sins for which they were offered.

The idea has remained on in the Christian Church, and has been fruitful of very much false religion and iniquity, so difficult is it to root out the idea from sinful, selfish man, or prevent him grasping at a religious system which seems

[1] Heb. ix. 9, 10. [2] *Ibid.* x. 4.

to offer so easy a way of escape from punishment, by which he can enjoy this world as much as he likes without losing his chance in the next. For example, by the sixteenth century the idea of the Mass, which was popularly held through most parts of the Western Church and taught by many accredited theologians and doctors, was that 'it was an absolute sacrifice, complete in itself, affording an expiation independent of that accomplished by our Lord on the cross': or 'that our Lord by the sacrifice of the cross had expiated original sin as well as sins committed under the old law and by individuals before Baptism, and that the Mass expiated sins committed after Baptism'; again, 'that by the sacrifice of the Mass mortal sins were effaced, *ex opere operato*.[1] Hence the constant practice all over the Western Church then of multiplying masses—having them said at so much apiece—in the belief that each mass was a sacrifice which expiated sin of itself. Hence also a man, who had sinfully enjoyed the good things of this world all his life, thought it could be put right afterwards and the consequences of his sins would be annulled if he left a large sum in his will for masses to be said for his soul!

The Council of Trent tried to reform these abuses and condemned the above false teaching. But the same kind of practice soon came in again and is to be seen in most parts of the Roman Catholic Church now. The same false notion is seen in the popular idea in that Church of the effect of the intercession of the saints. The truth about it is distorted, and it is often popularly supposed that the saints can and no doubt will make it all right for sinners, even though they go on in their sins.

Such abuses are seen not only in the Roman Catholic Church. There are thousands of people who call themselves good Churchmen, who make money—heap up riches—by unlawful means, or by 'grinding the faces of the poor,' in England, and still more in America, who think all this can be made right by a small amount of church-going, or by

[1] Quoted from Dr. Dalbus, a Roman Catholic divine, in a paper on Anglican Ordinations, published in 1894. See Moberly, *Ministerial Priesthood*, pp. 310 f.

doling out in ' charity ' sums the loss of which they do not feel. They are not to be blamed so much as the Church which allows them to think thus. This kind of abuse is brilliantly exposed in some of Winston Churchill's novels, where thoughtful men are depicted as giving up Christianity, because it does condone this monstrous theory.

Under the influence of the same false notion, many protestant sects teach that faith in Jesus means leaving it all to Him and doing nothing yourself! They suppose that was what S. Paul meant. We can find ' peace ' by trusting to Christ's atonement, i.e. to a sacrifice which has been offered by Christ merely in our stead. Though very many who hold this view contradict it entirely by their own good and self-sacrificing lives, yet such teaching is productive of very much cant, hypocrisy, and iniquity.

Further, this false idea of mediation is based upon and itself increases a false view of God's character—a view so false that it can almost be said to be the opposite of the true one. It is the view that God is offended and hurt by sin or neglect in the same way that selfish men are : that therefore He turns away from the sinner in disgust or anger, and has to be induced—bribed, in fact, by some offering—to turn back again and look kindly on the sinner. This at its best is the idea that God's justice requires, to atone for the sin which has been done, an equivalent in the way of punishment, and that, however much His mercy inclines Him to forgive without exacting punishment, His justice forbids Him to do so—as though there were contradictory and contending elements in God's character and being. This is the view nearly all false religions have taken of their gods : they think them like themselves, and the more revengeful they feel against their enemies, the more they think that God is the same. This was the view which the nation of Israel persisted in taking all through its history. God again and again tried to turn them from it and show them what He really was and desired. The books of the prophets contain very many such attempts ; e.g., the earliest of all, Amos v. 12–27, or Micah vi. 6–8, where the false and true views are contrasted ; or Isa. i. 10–19, &c., &c.

This is the view which is at the root of most of the false religious practices which have prevailed in the Christian Church, and are so common still. It is the view which the New Testament directly contradicts from beginning to end, by proclaiming the true one, which is that God is love and therefore needs nothing to induce Him to be favourable to His people ; that His love for them cannot change ; that He hates sin indeed with the whole force of His being, but has only one desire for the sinner—that he may give up sin and be filled with divine life ; that He is willing to and actually does sacrifice Himself to the uttermost that this may be ; that, when He comes Himself to be mediator or sends others, it is that He and they may enable sinners to repent and live ; that He can only punish men in order to reform them, never for the sake of taking vengeance or exacting an equivalent for sin, which perfect love can never desire to do.

The contrast which we have now thought of between the two views of mediation shows that one is a distortion of the other, and that the same language used about mediation may convey opposite ideas, according to the prepossession in the minds of those who use it. It shows also how easily we might slide from time to time into the false view, unless the line of demarcation between the two were clearly seen and held to. It is worth while, therefore, to look at the two again and see how the false is a distortion of the true.

We may for the moment disregard the Jewish and heathen notions. It can be said that all the false views which have been held on the subject within the Christian Church, spring from the idea that Christ's atoning sacrifice was one offered instead of the sacrifice that man refused to give, and that it suffices in our stead. It has been supposed for ages that this is the faith of the Church. And it has naturally accentuated the idea, from which it probably sprang, that God desires vengeance, or at least an equivalent in punishment, for the sins of men. Hence theologians have laboured to show how Christ's sufferings were an equivalent for, and therefore the grounds on which God could forgive, men's sins.

If it is once admitted that God is willing to accept anything in the place of the sacrifice which we ought to make, then it is comparatively easy to suppose He may accept many things : or, to put it in another way, that the price offered by Christ may be doled out in various ways for the benefit of sinners. Directly men believe that anything or that someone else's efforts will suffice instead of their own, they find it easy to invent ingenious theories whereby to apply this belief ; e.g. in the Roman Church, that the superabundant merits of the saints will fill up their lack of merit ; that the ceremonial offering in the Mass of Christ's sacrifice will have great expiatory value of itself ; or, in the Anglican Church, that a little church-going or subscriptions to charities will make up for much wrong-doing and selfishness ; or, in protestant sects, that all we have to do is to trust to something which Christ did for us nearly two thousand years ago, as making up for all our deficiencies. All these are so many bad distortions of the truth of Christ's mediation, i.e. that God is love and therefore desires every man to be perfect in love, to give himself wholly as God does ; that God cannot rest till this is accomplished ; that, because man had fallen so deeply that he could not do this of himself, God came into his nature to enable man to live the life of love of God.[1] It is true that Christ did for man what man could not do without Him ; but He did it solely to enable all men to do it too—not to do it instead of them, which would not fulfil God's purpose at all !

Hence the Mass is not something offered in our stead, but is the chief means by which Christ gathers His own into Himself and enables them to offer themselves, body and soul, as He does, for the service of God and men.

Hence, also, the intercession of the saints and all the inflowing of their life into ours, which is a large part of what we mean by the communion of saints, is in order that we ourselves may become more saintly—Christlike.

Christ, therefore, is the mediator between God and man, or man's true High Priest, because He is the one without Whom man could not live God's life, but through Whom he

[1] See, e.g., Col. i. 24–29.

can. And the whole Church, possessing this life of Christ, is a priestly or mediating body with Him—His own body, in fact—through which men receive the life of Christ, the power to give themselves to a life of love. So too any members of the Church can be in special ways priests by God's appointment, i.e. special organs through which Christ's life flows to people to enable them to be Christ-like too.

But so long as men do not and will not give themselves to a life of love, but prefer to remain selfish, so long Christ's mediation does not avail for them. For the all-loving God cannot be satisfied till they too are perfectly loving—saints. Think of the Incarnation from this point of view, to see what God's purpose for man, and therefore for all men, is. He came into human nature that He might put the greatest possible strain on it. His Incarnation itself made an immeasurable demand on His mother, but even she could not have conceived that such awful strain could be put on the body and soul which were those of her Son, nor that such wonderful powers could have been evoked from Him. It was God coming to demand from human nature the greatest possible amount of love that man could be made capable of giving until at last Christ's human nature was breaking under the strain. In Gethsemane He felt He could not bear it, but the Father still demanded that He should bear it to the uttermost. This is the result of God's great love for man: He cannot rest till man is raised to the highest possible condition.

Let us now examine the teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the main subject of which is the high priesthood of Christ.

We cannot be sure as to who wrote the Epistle, or to what body of Christians it was written; yet we can gain from it a clear idea of the purpose for which it is written, and of the reason why the teaching takes the forms it does. There is no good reason to doubt that the title 'to the Hebrews' correctly indicates its destination. It seems to have been written when a great day of judgment was approaching (e.g. x. 25; xii. 26, 27). And it seems most probable that it was written to the Hebrew Christian

community in Rome (though many think it more likely that it was written to a Church either in Jerusalem or Antioch), when the Jewish war which ended in the destruction of the Jewish state was imminent or beginning. At any rate, it was written to reassure and confirm the faith of Hebrew Christians, who were feeling deeply either the impending or actual loss of their national worship; were realizing that the Christian Church and the Jewish were separate, and not one as they had thought, and that they must make choice between them.

Now to the Hebrews the ideal of their nation was that it was a priestly nation. They had indeed lost the idea of the divine plan that it should be a priestly nation for the rest of the world. But they felt that their whole national life was bound up with the idea of priestly work. The elaborate system of sacrifices was necessary, if they were to remain God's chosen people; for apart from them they had no access to God: they would be unclean—outcasts. As we have seen, they had mistaken what God had been trying to teach all through their history, and had come to depend on an external system of offerings, which would appease God and obtain access to Him, and would do instead of the offering of themselves. The Epistle is designed to teach that the old order of priesthood is passing away, because it had already been succeeded by a new order (foreshadowed by God at the beginning to Abraham their father), which is the perfect one; that they had not yet understood, but must now learn, what the true ideal priesthood is; that Christ, the Son of God in heaven, is the perfect high priest; that through Him all men have free, unrestricted access to God, because in and through Him there is and can be for all men a complete union between God and man; that Christianity is consequently the one, perfect, final religion for all men, for which the Jewish religion was an imperfect and transitory preparation; and that therefore, in passing from their old religion into Christianity, these Hebrews are exchanging an earthly type for its heavenly reality.

The writer develops his theme very cautiously, and

with severe warnings of the danger of neglecting it. He feels that his hearers have had their consciences and whole spiritual outlook so deadened and narrowed by their Jewish religious ideas that they will have great difficulty in rising to the glorious truth about Christ's priesthood, and in making the necessary effort to assimilate what Christ offers: much as an invalid, who has been too long accustomed to nurses and crutches, needs to be stirred up to believe that he can walk by himself, and to accept the new strength which is waiting for him.

He begins by speaking of the exaltation of Jesus above the angels, and gives the testimony of their scriptures to this (chap. i.). Then he warns them of the peril of neglecting the new revelation given through Jesus, which is far higher than the one given of old to Moses by angels, and proceeds to show how high man's vocation is. The world to come is subject, not to angels, but to man through Jesus, who Himself became man and as man bore and conquered suffering and death, that He might be the true high priest who could bring all men to God (chap. ii.). He then compares Jesus, our high priest, with Moses, and says He is as much more glorious than Moses as the son of a house is greater than a servant. Hence, he warns them, they must beware of the danger of treating the promises made by Christ as the fathers treated those made through Moses. The promise of rest, i.e. perfection, which was rejected by and therefore withdrawn from the fathers, is still before us, offered by Christ our high priest, Who has entered into heaven for us, and Who knows all our needs and can supply them. The responsibility of those to whom such promises are made is great indeed, but we can come to Christ in all confidence (chaps. iii. and iv.).

In chap. v. he approaches his main subject by giving a general description of the necessary characteristics of a high priest, which are found fulfilled in Christ (*vv.* 1–10). This passage we ought to consider at length.

v. 1. 'For every high priest, being taken from among men, is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins'; i.e. a

high priest, in order to act for man, must be himself man, and is appointed that he may establish the true relation between men and God; and, man being sinful, this can only be done through the offering of sacrifices which will remove the barriers between men and God that sin creates.

v. 2. For this, two qualifications are necessary: first, he must have sympathy with ignorant and erring man—sympathy which comes through actual knowledge of the nature of sin and the weakness which is caused by it.

v. 3 seems at first sight to apply only to the case of a mere human high priest, who must purify himself if he is to intercede for others. But it can be applied to Christ also, Who, though there was no sin of His own for which He needed purification, yet made Himself so completely one with sinners that it was *as though* He needed both penitence and purification.[1]

v. 4. The second necessary qualification is that he is called by God. For only God can know who and what is necessary, in order that man may be brought into union with Him. Then the writer shows, in the reverse order, that these two qualifications are fulfilled in Christ.

v. 5. (1) Christ was made high priest by God. He gives the Hebrews scriptural proof of this, which has not the same force for us. For us it is only another way of saying, 'God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son' to save it. Christ's high priesthood is in the highest possible sense by divine appointment, for God sends Himself to be our high priest. There is no need to dwell further on this now, but what we need to dwell upon is how He fulfils the first qualification, i.e. His perfect sympathy with us—how He knows to the uttermost what the struggle is, through which alone man can attain to union with God.

This is expressed in *vv.* 7, 8, which may be paraphrased as follows: during the time when He had a mortal body, having struggled with the whole force of His human will, as the culmination of the struggle in Gethsemane and on the Cross shows, to gain for man union with God, i.e. complete

[1] See 2 Cor. v. 21. Cf. S. Matt. iii. 13–15.

victory over and salvation from the spiritual death which was the barrier between God and man; and, because of His complete devotion, having obtained for His human nature power to do God's will at each step: though He was a Son and therefore had Himself perfect access to the Father, yet He worked to win this access for humanity, by rendering perfect obedience at each step with His human will, learning, as He struggled on, what obedience implied by what it cost Him to render it.

v. 9. 'And having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author (αἴτιος), or cause, of eternal salvation,' i.e. His human nature having been exalted to heaven and filled with God's life, because of His complete obedience (cf. Phil. ii. 5–10), He is the cause of salvation to all who accept Him as their Saviour. (The masculine form of the cause, αἴτιος, implies that He, and not merely something He has done, is each one's salvation, even as He Himself says, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life,' 'because I live, ye shall live also.') Christ's glorified human life is the life of perfect love, and therefore is in itself, not merely once was, victorious over all sin and death—over all selfishness and its results—just as light is in itself that which is victorious over darkness. And Christ imparts this life to all who desire and come for it, according to the need of each, that each may be victorious over his particular sin and temptation, just as I might give light, i.e. lights, to many people, that each might triumph over the particular darkness he was in.

But that Christ may give this life according to the need of each, it is necessary that He should know perfectly what the need of each is—that He should be in perfect sympathy with each, as He is. It is not merely that He can understand human suffering and weakness, because He once passed through the extremity of suffering in the struggle against sin. It is much more than that. As He was originally 'conceived by the Holy Ghost,' i.e. as the divine love caused or enabled Him to become man—to make a human life and consciousness His own, as truly as though He had no other: so now the divine love, with

which His human soul is fulfilled, enables Him to make the consciousness of each human person His own. What happens to each of us happens really, and not by mere figure of speech, to Him. Hence He can say, 'I am Jesus whom thou persecutest,' 'Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even the least, ye did it unto me.' What I am conscious of now—sorrow, joy, temptation, or even sin—He is conscious of. The love He gives to us enables us to make other people's consciousness our own to some extent. But the love which the eternal Father everlastingly pours into His human soul enables Him to do this perfectly in all cases. Hence the grace He gives to us in the sacraments, and desires to give to all men, is exactly fitted to our needs.

There have been lately a good many stories about this war, which illustrate the meaning of Christ's sympathy, whether they are relations of actual occurrences or fiction. They are stories about 'the Comrade.' E.g. A young officer, lying wounded and unable to move, feels that he is dying, and is suddenly addressed by one whom he cannot see, and who says he is wounded also. The man confides in this unseen comrade that he feels it hard to be dying, though a few minutes ago he was full of vigorous life. The Comrade says, 'Yes, I feel that too,' and goes on to make it clear that he does. The immediate result is that the young wounded man feels able to bear it all; that the sting of it has gone, and that as long as the unseen friend will keep near him he can be both brave and happy. Another story is of a man who was sentenced to be shot for cowardice, of which he had not been guilty: some mistake had been made, but he had to face death knowing that his people would hear that he had been shot as a coward. The 'Comrade' came to him, and the result was the same. Such stories, if not those of actual people's experiences, must have been invented by one who had had similar experiences himself; and in any case they are true—real illustrations of what our Lord is to each of us. He may not make His presence felt as He did to those two men, because He wants us to put forth all our power of faith

and love to seek Him and so find Him. But He is with each of us as really, feeling what we feel, feeling our needs as His own, and holding out to us the power which is necessary for supplying them. We can 'therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need' (Heb. iv. 16).

Christ our High Priest after the Order of Melchisedek.—After the passage (v. 1–10) which we have considered, the apostle pauses to give a preparatory warning and exhortation (v. 11–vi. 20). He says the deeper truths of this subject cannot be entered on by those who are content, as the Hebrews had been, to remain beginners. He exhorts them to leave the rudiments and press on. He reminds them that knowledge of God misused or neglected may issue in a curse, and that there may be an apostasy from which there is no rising, and shows how this is illustrated in nature. Then he passes to more loving exhortation, and expresses his confidence in the Hebrews and his intense desire that they should rise to their high ideal. He encourages them to patience, by pointing out the certainty of the divine promises, the fulfilment of which is to be seen in Abraham's case, but is doubly assured to us by the entrance into heaven of Jesus, as our forerunner and high priest after the order of Melchisedek. Then he proceeds to explain what is the meaning of Christ's priesthood after the order of Melchisedek (chap. vii.).

The apostle takes for granted now that Christ is a priest after the order of Melchisedek, in accordance with the Jewish tradition that the Messiah would be (see v. 5, 6; qu. Ps. cx.). His primary object in expounding the nature of priesthood after the order of Melchisedek is to show the Hebrews that, in leaving their old religion for the new, they are leaving what was merely partial and temporary for what is eternal, which was therefore a matter not for grief or despondency, but for great joy and hope. But in doing this he portrays the ideal priesthood which is Christ's, in a way that is of the greatest value to us, though we do

not need the same kind of reassurance that these Hebrews needed.

Let us take first his exposition of the subject as it appealed specially to them, which, however, I put in brackets as not being a necessary part of our subject, and then consider its universal value.

[The only mention of Melchisedek in Old Testament history is in Gen. xiv. 18–20. He comments on this (1) by explaining that that scripture depicts the ideal priest (*vv.* 1–3), and then (2) the superiority of his priesthood to that of Aaron (*vv.* 4–28 *passim*). This we take first. He was priest of God most high, whom he (Melchisedek) describes as ' possessor ' or ' maker of heaven and earth ' (Gen. xiv. 19) before God had chosen the Jewish race to be His special people : a priest, therefore, of humanity in general, and to him Abraham gave tithes. The whole Jewish race, and its Levitical or Aaronic priesthood, was then in the loins of Abraham. The contrast between the two priesthoods, therefore, is between the priesthood of mankind in general and that of a particular race. Moreover, the fact that God gave this vision of the universal priest before the Jewish race had begun, shows that the Aaronic priesthood was meant to be only a partial and temporary manifestation of priesthood, to lead towards the full manifestation which was to come. And this had been recognized by the Jews themselves. This strange vision of Melchisedek had seized hold of their imagination, so that the looked for Messiah, it was said, was to be ' a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek ' (Ps. cx.). Melchisedek had to their minds been a divine foreshowing of the Messianic ideal.

Now, when the apostle was writing, it was quite obvious to all the Hebrews that their Aaronic priesthood had not developed into anything like a universal one. It had had very little effect indeed on the rest of the nations of the world. And now its service was coming to an end even for its own nation. Therefore, when the apostle pointed out that our Lord did not come of the tribe of Levi but of Judah, of which nothing had been said about priesthood by Moses,

so that He was not of the Aaronic priesthood, but that He was a priest after the order of Melchisedek, they ought to have been able to see that, in leaving their old religion for the new, they were only leaving the partial and temporary for the universal; the shadow for the substance; the figurative for the ideal. This argument runs through the rest of chap. vii. It is an argument which had very great force for the Hebrews in their present distress, though little for us.]

The rest of the teaching of the chapter—its main teaching indeed, about the ideal priesthood—is of very great value to us also. This then we proceed to consider.

vv. 1–3. He begins with what the account in Genesis says: 'Melchisedek, King of Salem, priest of God Most High . . . King of peace.' This means that Melchisedek, priest of God, is King of righteousness: his name means that; and King of peace: his title, King of Salem, means that. He gets the rest out of the silence of the Genesis account. Melchisedek is (so far as the record goes) 'without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God'; therefore, 'he abideth a priest continually.' It seems a very strange way of interpreting scripture, but we must bear in mind that he does not say or imply that the writer of Genesis intended all that. His mind is full of the thought of Jesus Christ, the perfect high priest, and he is describing the perfect priest and His perfect work. Then he looks back to the account of Melchisedek, and sees that as the account stands it is a wonderful foreshadowing of it, given before the Jewish race existed. Perhaps the account seemed to him to imply that it was a vision which had been granted to Abraham, rather than the visit of an actual human priest. Many have thought since (e.g. Origen) that it was a theophany: he may have thought so too. But however we may account for what seems to us this strange use of scripture, he did see in this account in Genesis a type of the perfect priest. There is nothing illegitimate about the method he adopts. He is not trying to prove that Christ is our high priest by what

the scripture does not say. He knows Christ is our high priest, because of His life, passion, death, Resurrection, and Ascension. And he wants to describe Him as the true high priest. He sees in Genesis a typical description of Him, and therefore he uses that and describes Him as the fulfilment of that type; much as preachers now often describe our journey towards heaven in terms of the typical description of it contained in the account of the Jews journeying towards the Holy Land. The thing of chief importance to us is to understand his description of the perfect priest and ideal priesthood, which is fulfilled by Christ.

Christ, our high priest, is (1) the king of righteousness and peace, i.e. one Who can perfectly establish righteousness, not merely offer something which will do instead of it, and so bring about man's peace, which includes the ideas of soundness and fulness. This means for man perfect fellowship with God, for man made in God's image can only be fulfilled, or wholly 'at peace,' when he is in union with God and filled with His life.

(2) He is the priest of all mankind, not merely of a section of the race, i.e. He can produce righteousness and peace in the whole race—that part of it which has lived on earth, is living now, and is to live.

(3) He is man's perfect priest, because of what He is eternally, not because He has received a priesthood. He is man's priest, because He is the Son of God, the perfect expression of all God's love for man. Strictly speaking, He never became man's high priest: He is it by nature. Just as all things were made by Him, because He is the expression of all God's will, so He must ever be the true priest who gives Himself wholly for and to man, because He is the expression of all God's love. There was a partial manifestation of His priesthood in the Aaronic, but the perfect one is in His own human life, offered entirely for man, on earth amid suffering, and now in heaven. But the priestly work He thus did and does is the work He was eternally appointed to do by God, in that He is God's only-begotten Son, Who perfectly manifests and does all

His will for man. He has always been doing this work for all men, so far as they would let Him, i.e. giving Himself to bring them to God. But He could not make the perfectly effective offering of Himself, till the time came when it was possible for Him to become Incarnate. Now His perfect offering has been made, and He is therefore 'able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through Him.'[1]

This truth that Christ is man's priest, because He is what He is in His eternal nature, is a very precious one. If it had been more dwelt on and assimilated by the Church, it would have saved her from much narrowness of view, false beliefs, and evil, unchristian practices. The apostle's teaching is that Christ is perpetually man's high priest, always therefore giving Himself for all men, working for them unceasingly, because He is what He is by nature. There can be no limit to His high-priestly work, because He is the perfect love of God eternally expressed. Looked at from man's side, this means that so long as man goes on existing, which he does for ever, each man has Christ working for him, giving Himself for him to the uttermost to bring him to perfect righteousness and peace, i.e. into complete union with God, for nothing short of this can be man's peace. The condition man is in cannot make any difference at all to the fact that Christ is always giving Himself for him. He may be among 'the lost' in hell, but Christ's priestly work must be going on just the same, that He may save him that was lost and bring him out of hell.

How different has been the belief of Christians in most ages! It is gradually improving, but very many now—perhaps most—still think and talk as though Christ would intercede for the wicked or those who do not know Him up to a certain point and then stop. In former ages it was supposed that all the heathen who had not come to know Christ in this world were going to hell, i.e. to a hopeless state of everlasting banishment from the love and care of God; that the majority of Christian people would do the same; and many have followed the teaching of

[1] Heb. vii. 25; and see the whole passage, vii. 15–28.

S. Augustine that all unbaptized babies would be lost to God for ever, though he conceded that this would not be to them so dreadful as the hell of the rest, because they would not know what they had lost.

Yet our Lord's own parables of grace express just what is implied in this apostle's description of our Lord's unchanging priesthood, which is inherent in His nature and depends only on what He is, not on what the people are for whom He intercedes. Our Lord describes Himself again and again as going after that which is lost until He finds it ; He tells us, in fact, that if only one is lost, His whole energy is so concentrated on finding him and bringing him back that it is as though He thought only of him and not of the rest. What we see at present, or in any one generation on earth, of the results of Christ's high-priestly work is quite another matter. We are not to judge of His work or its effects by that, but only by what He is eternally. The apostle has already said this in ii. 6–9. The work Christ is able to do through the Church militant here on earth in any one generation depends on the faithfulness of its members. We cannot, though we may try to, judge at all accurately of what would happen if the Church on earth were one instead of divided so badly, or if it were holy as it ought to be, or of what does happen through the Church beyond the grave, by what *we* see in one generation, or read of as having happened in the past. But even we see that Jesus is able to bring every kind of sinner, however hardened, into union with God, whenever He can find faithful disciples through whom He can work. Think what is happening in London parishes, or here before our eyes. We have seen people brought out of hell over and over again. We have seen that nothing is too much for God's patience, that no evil deeds prevent Christ from interceding. We have therefore abundant reason to rise up and embrace this glorious truth, that there is no limit whatever to the power or extent of Christ's high-priestly intercession. It is as perfect and everlasting as He is, and He is the expression of all the love of God. [See Appendix.]

To sum up: the apostle has now shown that Christ is such a high priest as we require. He possesses perfect sympathy with us, and is in the highest possible sense appointed by God. Moreover, He fulfils the highest order of priesthood for man, of which the type had been indicated ages ago in the vision of Melchisedek. He is thus the perfect, absolute high priest, in Whom exists complete union between God and man, and through Whom *all* men can gain a share in that union; and Who, because He is what He is, must always go on working as man's high priest so long as there is any man left who has not yet gained that union.

The apostle next goes on to speak of the fulfilment of Christ's high-priestly work, in contrast with and as the perfection of that of the Levitical, chap. viii. 1–x. 18, and thus completes the subject. This is in three parts, contained respectively in chap. viii., chap. ix., and chap. x. 1–18.

The Condition of Christ's High-priestly Work.—Chap. viii., *vv.* 1, 2. His work is done in the true, the heavenly sanctuary, of which the sanctuary of the Mosaic dispensation was a very imperfect copy. 'We have such a high priest who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary, or holy of holies, and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, not man.' Here He makes His high-priestly offering, which is explained elsewhere to be the offering of Himself.[1]

vv. 4, 5. The old priestly service had its own appointed priests, and Christ is not one of these, but the high priest of a new and heavenly order, of which the old priestly service on earth was only a copy and shadow.

v. 6. 'He hath obtained a ministry,' he says, 'the more excellent, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which hath been enacted upon better promises.'

What, then, is the heavenly sanctuary, of which Moses' was a shadow? The teaching of the whole Epistle shows that it is Christ Himself. A tabernacle, or holy of holies,

[1] Heb. vii. 27; ix. 12, 14, 25, 26; x. 10.

made for man is a dwelling-place of the divine presence in which God meets with man, to take away his sin and bring him into union with Himself. The tabernacle in the wilderness or the temple in Jerusalem was the sacred spot on the earth where God met His people, where man could come near to Him and be purged of his sin. This was the divinely appointed holy of holies, from which purification was intended to flow to the whole world. Such was the copy of the heavenly reality. The true tabernacle is Christ, Who is the perfect manifestation of divine glory—God Himself expressed; the perfect meeting-place of God and man, for He is God and man and all men are potentially at least in Him; and the sanctuary, in which the offering is always being made through which man becomes holy and united to God, i.e. the offering of Christ Himself. This which was at first the offering only of the man Christ Jesus made perfect at His death, now includes also the offering of all the men and women who, through the power of Christ's life communicated to them, are able to offer themselves as complete sacrifices to God in heaven; the offering also of all those who like ourselves are still sinners, but who can offer ourselves, our souls and bodies to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice to God, through the power Christ gives us who partake of His sacrifice.[1] Christ and His saints, and even we His disciples who are still partially sinners, are the light of the world. And the offering or sacrifice of us all is that which is gradually bringing the world into union with God.

vv. 7–13. Through Him, then, our high priest, at work always for us in heaven, the new covenant is made, to which the Old Testament covenant pointed. The apostle reminds the Hebrews that God's purpose of establishing this new covenant was proclaimed to and through Jeremiah, the prophet of the Exile: 'Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers. . . . I will put my laws into their mind, and on their heart also will I write

[1] Cf. Rev. xxi. 22–27.

them : and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. And they shall not teach every man his fellow-citizen and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord : for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and their sins will I remember no more.' This new covenant, like the old, is the work of God from first to last. As God gave man life in the beginning, and offered him a share in His own life, which, however, he could not have unless he responded to God and chose it : so, when man refused it and gradually became more and more incapable of it, God Himself became man, and so made it possible for all men to receive it in spite of man's former refusal and the incapacity for it which had resulted therefrom. Having done this, God now makes the new covenant with all men, i.e. offers them His own life, a share for ever in His own blessedness, and asks us all to accept His gift and make it our own.[1]

Lest God's purpose should be mistaken, it must be borne in mind that, in making such a covenant with man, God is not doing anything for, i.e. instead of, man, which man could and therefore ought to do for himself. He is giving to man a gift by which he can rise out of his own natural kingdom and live the life of the kingdom of God, because without such a gift man could not possibly rise to this height. And in asking him to respond, i.e. to accept this gift of life and make it his own, He is calling upon man to put forth and use to the uttermost the highest and most strenuous force of which he is capable : for only thus can he become what God means him to be.

The apostle now goes on, in chap. ix., to explain *how the new covenant is established by Christ, in contrast with what happened under the old Levitical dispensation.*

vv. 1–10. He begins by describing the Levitical services of the tabernacle or temple. In this there was an outer and an inner tabernacle (he is speaking only of the tabernacle

[1] This explains and is explained by the fact that Biblical writers substitute the word *διαθήκη* (which should always be translated 'covenant') for *συνθήκη*, the ordinary word for a covenant contracted between two free and equal parties.

proper). In the first, or outer one, the priests went continually to accomplish the services. In this was the candlestick with its seven lamps, signifying the light of God shining in a dark world, which the Jewish nation was meant to show; and also the table of shewbread, signifying man's offering to God, to be ever renewed and kept pure. The highest service of which Israel was capable was signified and offered here in the outer tabernacle. Then behind the inner veil was the second tabernacle, or holy of holies, where God's presence was. Into this Israel could not go. The high priest went in once a year with great fear, sending up clouds of incense that the presence might be hidden from him, lest he should die. And he entered 'not without blood.' He took in the offering of a life for his own sins and those of the people. By all this, says the apostle, the Holy Ghost signified that the way into the holy place had not yet been made manifest. Israel could not as yet attain to union with God. Only the hope was given that some day a perfect high priest with the offering of a perfect life would come to rend away the veil and admit God's people into the life of union with Him. It was thus made quite clear to Israel that God must provide the means of access to Him: Israel could not. Yet the whole history of Israel showed that God did not keep Israel outside the holy of holies, because He did not want him to enter. Had not God been calling His people to Himself ever since they became a people? He had pleaded with them to come to Him, as a lover pleads, all through their history. The veil, therefore, signified that, though God longed for them to come, there was something which made union between Him and them impossible. That, of course, was sin. The sacrifices of the law and the scapegoat on the Day of Atonement could only signify that sin needed to be taken away—it was impossible that the blood of bulls or goats could take it away. A complete atonement was necessary. Man could not effect it; he could only long for it; and the main object of the Levitical service was to cause him to do so—to desire that union with his God, from which he was debarred by his sin; in other words, to desire that his sin should be done away. This the Jewish people

never understood. They wanted the punishment of their sins to be done away ; eagerly sought for means of appeasing God's wrath, but never realized that what kept man from God was not God's resentment, but man's own sin.

Hence our Lord, when He came to fulfil what the law had pointed to, was first preceded by S. John the Baptist, who tried to complete this part of the law's teaching. 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand,' he said ; therefore repent, and be real about it. 'Behold the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.' 'He is come whom the Jewish nation has all along been led to expect. Therefore repent. He is come to take away your sins, but he cannot do it, if you do not want to give them up and make amends for them.' Then came our Lord's own teaching, which reiterated constantly the teaching of the prophet Jeremiah, that the making of the new covenant was God's work from first to last. 'Except a man be born again, or from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Except a man be born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God.' 'Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein.' But He proclaimed that He had come to make the new covenant. 'I am the door ; I am the way ; come unto me.' 'Apart from me ye can do nothing.' And so His apostles, following His teaching, proclaim that without faith in God we cannot get to God. 'Every good gift and every perfect boon is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow which is cast by turning.' Thus the Old Testament, Christ, and His apostles simply proclaim in many different ways that which S. John puts before us as the central truth, from which the whole Christian theology is deduced : 'God is love'—the perfect giver. As He gives life to all every minute, or life would cease, so from Him alone comes spiritual life, the power to live in union with Him ; in other words, the power by which alone men can give up their sins, to die to them, that they may live the life of God, Who is love. But God's whole gift of life, i.e. the power to give up sins and to love, cannot avail for anyone till he wants to be un-

selfish and to love—in fact, till he desires that God's life shall enter in to transform him.

This many Christians also find it hard to understand. They say, if God is so loving, why cannot He forgive us and admit us into His home? Why is the sacrifice of Christ necessary? We are all slow to grasp that it is a moral impossibility for sinners as such to be in union with God. God is love, and sin is selfishness, the exact opposite of love. Till the selfishness is gone, there cannot be union, however much God desires it. And God wants to teach us, as He tried to teach the Jews, that before we can receive His gift of new life we must want our sins—all our selfishness—to be taken away; we must want to die to it; we must not want our own things any longer, but must want to give ourselves away, to lose our life, as Christ puts it, for God's sake. The veil then which separates us from God is not in reality something which God puts up, but which we put up. All men want the punishment or consequence of their sin to be done away (that is generally a merely selfish desire), but the worst consequence of sin is that it makes sinners desire to go on in their selfishness. We shall only understand what the Epistle teaches about Christ's high-priestly work, so far as we realize that the task before Him is to make us desire to be loving and no longer selfish.

Thus the Levitical service showed that man was still outside the veil, gave hints, or promises, that a perfect high priest with the offering of a perfect life should one day come to take away the veil and make man at one with God, and thus was meant to cause Israel to desire the coming of the Saviour; and there its functions ended.

The apostle now proceeds to consider Christ's work for man in contrast with this (*vv.* 11–28).

All the other New Testament interpreters of the Gospel agree with the writer of this Epistle as to what Christ did and does to make man at-one with God. We considered this teaching at considerable length before. It is only necessary now to repeat it shortly. Christ bore man's sins and died to them, or put them to death completely, so that when His physical death took place on Good Friday

His human nature was in such a condition that sin could not gain any entrance into it anywhere. He had finally and for ever condemned sin as impotent to hurt Him or divert His human will in even the least degree from the service of God.

We can understand this to some extent, for we know by experience what it is to die to certain sins or bad habits, so that the temptations or habits which used to have dominion over us have no dominion now. We know of many people of whom we can say, 'they used to be overcome by this or that temptation: it is morally impossible for them to fall in that way now, so rooted are their wills in reliance on God and hatred of those old sins.' And we know that in each case such victory is won by a long-continued succession of acts of the person's will, striving against sin and to be obedient to God's will. We can therefore imagine the perfection of such struggle and victory in Christ. As the force of old sins and bad habits beats upon us to drive us into sinning, so the force of the sins and bad habits of the race beats upon Christ, Who had made Himself the head of it. He must have felt the whole force of evil that could be brought to bear upon Him, because He was always sinless, never weakened by actual sinning, and therefore able to bear the whole force of temptation, which no sinner ever bears, because he gives way before he has felt it all. He loved man to the uttermost and had come to bear and conquer all that was keeping men from union with God, and because the whole army of evil spirits would of course do everything that could be done to cause Him to sin. And, bearing all this, He was at every moment of His life entirely obedient and faithful to God, until the whole victory had been won—all the force of evil conquered, and He could say, 'It is finished,' and commend His Spirit into His Father's hands. Then the veil which prevented man from union with God was gone! The rending of the actual veil in the Temple at the time of Christ's death was no doubt the outward and visible sign of this. Man was inside the holy of holies, at-one with God. Nothing more was needed, for God had always been waiting with out-

stretched arms for man ; but hitherto man would not and therefore could not come. His will was bent towards self, not God. He did not desire to live God's life of perfect self-giving. (We know this impossibility—how we may long for union with one who will not come, who keeps himself outside us deliberately, so that we cannot 'be friends,' as we say.) But as soon as man not only wanted to live God's life but was actually living it, then at once God must admit Him to the closest possible union with Himself, and in doing so find the satisfaction of the longing for man, which had never been satisfied before. It is, then, through the offering of Christ's perfect life of obedience to God, the life in which He died completely to sin and all that sin can do, that man is brought into union with God. We can now follow the actual words of the Epistle.

v. 11. 'But Christ having come a high priest of the good things that are come' (R.V., margin), i.e. that are now realities and do not exist merely in hope and prophecy, as under the Levitical system, 'through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation,' i.e. by means of His own humanity, which is the perfect tabernacle in which God dwells, (*v.* 12) 'nor yet through the blood of goats and calves,' which could not take away sins but could only point to the necessity of the offering of some perfect life, 'but through his own blood,' i.e. through His own life poured out, offered to God to the uttermost, even to the death of the cross, 'entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption,' i.e. obtained perfect union with God for man, which means for man a share in God's eternal life and therefore can never be broken.

v. 13. 'For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh,' i.e. if the typical ordinances of the Mosaic system gave outward or ceremonial purity which enabled the Jew to enjoy the privileges of the temple worship, (*v.* 14) 'how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from

dead works to serve the living God?' i.e. how much more shall the life of Christ, Who through His eternal love has conquered all human sin and serves God perfectly, when it is imparted to us, deliver our conscience from the defiling and deadening power of sin, and enable us also to give ourselves for the service of God?

v. 15. 'And for this cause he is the mediator of a new covenant, that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance,' i.e. because the blood or life of Christ purifies man and makes him able to serve God, He (Christ) is the means by which all men can enter into a new and perfect relation with God. The fact that Christ has died to all sin means that His life imparted to men can release them from the consequences and power of all the sins which the old covenant brought to light, and that they who have already been called to receive His life—Christians—by receiving it receive the promise of the eternal inheritance of the divine life.

Here we may well pause to remind ourselves that we, who have already by God's mercy been called into Christ, are actually now within the veil—inside the holy of holies—in our Father's heavenly home. We can of course, if we like, and as, alas! so many Christians do, live as though we were still outside, merely making the most of this world and trusting to some outward forms of religion, even as the Jews did, to save us from the future consequences of our sins. But our love for Christ and the desires He has put into our hearts for the coming of the kingdom have lifted us, thank God, out of that condition. We want to be holy and faithful servants of our Lord; we have offered Him our lives that we may help Him to spread His kingdom. And because we want to realize all that our present union with Christ means, let us then lay hold of the teaching of this Epistle. We are now 'in Christ' and therefore in heaven. As S. Paul says, 'our life is (now) hid with Christ in God.' All things are ours. The veil which was between man and God is destroyed. We are in the

heavenly sanctuary—the holy and glorious humanity of Christ.

But the glory of the sanctuary, the light of God's presence, is only just dawning on us : it is very often obscured from us by the false glories of this world. Yet we need not let the things of this world hide God from us. We can realize if we try that we are even now citizens of heaven ; that we have received the powers of the world to come. In Christ we live and move and have our being : and therefore all the different relationships of ours with other people are so many channels through which the life of Christ which is within us may flow. As we pray more, as we love more, the mists disperse and we see more of the glory of our heavenly inheritance : while, on the other hand, every act of selfishness, all unloving thoughts or actions by which we shut other people out of our hearts, become as a thick veil which we have put up again to hide God and the glory which surrounds us. The truth which God is asking us to realize more day by day, through our faithful use of Christ's life of love which He has imparted to us, is that expressed later on in the Epistle (xii. 22–24). Through and in Christ, our high priest, we ' are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than that of Abel,' i.e. we are in living union with all the glorious hosts of heaven who do God's will—who keep the new covenant—because we belong to Jesus the mediator of it, and have received and can constantly receive the cleansing blood, the life which has died to all sin and is therefore the power by which all selfishness can be done away, and all men can love with the whole force of their being.

We now come to the difficult verses 16, 17. They are made much more difficult than they need be in the R.V. by the translation of the Greek word in these verses only by the word ' testament ' instead of ' covenant ' (but see

R.V., margin). Such substitution is unnecessary and confuses the whole passage. The apostle has been speaking all through chapters viii. and ix. of a covenant, the Old Testament covenant, and of the new one which Christ has made instead of it. He is speaking to Hebrews, who were familiar with the Old Testament covenant and all its circumstances, and He merely appeals to what they know.

'For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be brought (or presented) the death of him that made it. For a covenant is sure where there hath been death, for it doth never avail (or, have force) while he that made it liveth.' That was always so under the Mosaic system. When the whole people or individuals entered into any covenant that God had made, they had to present a surrendered life, which was identified with their own, though it was not really their own. That signified that men can only enter into and keep God's covenant when they present to Him their whole life, themselves, who have died to the old life in which they were apart from God. And since the Jews were not yet able to do this, they presented the blood or life of sacrificed animals instead.

vv. 18–22. 'Wherefore,' the apostle goes on to say, 'even the first covenant hath not been dedicated without blood. For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses unto all the people according to the law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded to you-ward. Moreover the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry he sprinkled in like manner with the blood. And according to the law, I may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and apart from shedding of blood there is no remission.' He says that from the first great, inaugurating sacrifice of the old covenant (see Exod. xxiv.) all through the Mosaic system, the principle was laid down that Israel could only gain remission and power to enter into and keep God's covenant through the shedding of blood, i.e. through the offering of lives which had passed through death. The meaning

of this, which the Jews only understood very imperfectly, but which we can understand through Christ, is that the covenant between God and man can only be perfect when man can give himself wholly to God, having died to and risen above all that held him from God, in response to the perfect giving of God to man And this not because God is an exacting Father, but because only thus can man partake of the blessedness of the divine life which is love, or a perfect self-giving.

The apostle now returns to his task of showing how Christ fulfilled all that the old dispensation had signified.

vv. 23–26. 'It was necessary therefore that the copies of the things in the heavens should be cleansed with these,' i.e. the real cleansing that man required was not possible under the old dispensation, and therefore symbolical cleansing with the blood of animals was all that could be had: 'but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us: nor yet that he should offer himself often; as the high priest entereth into the holy place year by year with blood not his own; else must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once at the end (or, consummation) of the ages hath he been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself,' i.e. Christ has effected completely the reality of that which was shadowed in the old covenant. The holy place within the veil, into which man could not enter, signified heaven—the life of perfect union with God. Christ, being man, has entered into heaven itself, as the head or new beginning of the whole race of man. Nor has He entered with a sacrifice which needs to be repeated, as the high priest of old—if it had not been a complete atonement for all men, His passion would have had to be repeated often—but now once for all at the close of all the ages of preparation Christ has come into our nature, has fought against and conquered all that sin could do to man, has given a perfect offering to God of His whole life and being, in spite of all that had

hitherto prevented the whole race of man from doing so. He has therefore entered into the new and perfect covenant with God. In and through Him God and man are at one—living one life together. Nothing could make the covenant between God and man more perfect than it is in Christ. All that now remains to be done is to persuade the rest of men to accept and live by the perfect human life of Christ.

vv. 27, 28. 'And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die and after this cometh judgment; so Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him, unto salvation.' He means that as physical death closes man's account of his trial time once for all, and what follows is the judgment on it, or the manifestation of the issue of it: so also Christ's death marked the completion of His perfect work for man, and what follows is the salvation of all men which issues from it.

As the apostle repeats his glorious theme over and over again in his Epistle, so let us consider here once again what the offering of our Lord was, and therefore what issue is to be expected from it.

Our Lord's offering to God was the act of giving Himself to God, the complete devotion and surrender of His life, which was represented of old by the offering of the blood of dead animals. But it was not the mere offering of His own life as apart from the rest of the race. It implied also the taking upon Himself the whole burden of the race, lifting it all up on to the altar of the cross and nailing it there to die, so that when He rose from the dead He had left that burden behind, dead and done for. This is what the apostles express in many different ways, but with one consent, in the New Testament. The burden He bore for us, let us repeat, was the sinfulness of the race—the appalling moral weakness and habitual inclination to selfishness which resulted from the sins of men. This no mere man of his own strength could bear: all men had in all generations succumbed under it, and must, if left to themselves, succumb to the end of time. But Christ, who is God, took

our human nature in an unspotted, unweakened condition, and made it His own, in that He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, as we considered (pp. 13–22). Having taken it, He united it to the divine nature, by forcing His human will to act always in accordance with the will of God, so that in every act of His human life He lived in entire trust in and dependence on the power of God, i.e. put His human nature to its proper and perfect use. And thus He was able to take upon Himself the whole of man's burden, fight against, die to and rise above, all the force of selfishness which was in the race keeping men back from God. He therefore completely freed man's nature from the bondage to sin. The human life in which He rose at Easter and in which He lives for ever is human life which has died once for all to all that is evil, so that it cannot be overcome in any degree by any of it for ever, and so lives only unto God. What, then, is to be the issue of Christ's Death and Resurrection?

There is now in existence not only the human life which comes from Adam, which is weak, sinful, degraded; but also the perfect human life which is in Christ. It is in Him only that it may be in all men. That was what Christ was incarnate, fought, died and rose again for. He came only 'for us men and for our salvation.' Therefore, of course He offers it to all men who can be brought to understand what He means: He longs that all men should possess it; in so far as they do, He sees the result of the travail of His soul and is satisfied. God rejoices with measureless joy, when even one more sinner has been induced to repent and try to live by Christ's life of love. All His comings now, either to nations as through this war, or to individuals, are for salvation, i.e. that more men may be induced to hate evil and love good, and so to come to Him and receive the new life He is holding out to them. The last of all these comings —the final and complete one—shall be, says the apostle, 'without sin to them that wait for him, unto salvation,' i.e. when sin has all been done away, when the final result of Christ's offering for sin shall be manifested and all men through Christ have died to sin, as He died, and are waiting

for Him to deliver them—His perfected body or kingdom—into the Father's hands, that God may be all in all.

What, then, is the true, present attitude of all Christians in this world to Christ, their high priest? Christ expressed it before His death: 'Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many abiding places,' i.e. there is room enough for you all there, and for each his own place. 'I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, ye may be also.'[1] We are to believe in Him just as we believe in God, i.e. believe that He, God, is also man—the head and new fount of life to our race and to each member of it. At His Ascension the whole race—every individual in it—was potentially in heaven, in union with God, for He is the new humanity. Hence His presence in heaven means the preparing—the setting apart—of places for us all. Then He comes again, not once only, but continually to all those who will have Him, to receive us unto Himself—to give us His life and so make us one with Him.

The teaching of His discourses in S. John about His relation to His disciples, can only be understood in the light of the truth of His high priesthood. 'I am the way, the truth, and the life.' 'I am the vine,' not merely the root—I am the life of the whole redeemed humanity. 'Without me ye can do nothing'—He is our life, and apart from Him we have none. 'He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go to the Father.' 'Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do.' 'Because I live, ye shall live also.' 'I am the bread of life.' Hence our true attitude towards Him is one of complete trust in and dependence on Him for all we need—physical strength and courage necessary for our work; spiritual strength; light, wisdom, power of sympathy and of love of all kinds. Our trust in Him, God and man, is to resemble His trust in His Father, without Whom He did and does nothing. Moreover, this life of perfect dependence is the one only life, for which our nature

[1] S. John xiv. 1–3.

was made. It is therefore the life of joy and power. And we must never forget that all the strength we obtain from Christ, through a life of habitual trust in Him for everything, is to be used not for ourselves, any more than Christ's strength was, but for mankind in general and those to whom we are specially sent in particular, that we may help them to 'wait for Him,' as He comes to give them life.

We come now to the last section (see p. 232), in which the apostle emphasises, or repeats with additions and from another point of view, what he has been teaching about the fulfilment of Christ's high priestly work.

The Abiding Efficacy of Christ's Sacrifice, as seen through the contrast between His Sacrifice and the Levitical Ones. Chap. x. 1–18.

vv. 1, 2. He says the constant repetition of the Levitical sacrifices shows that they were imperfect. No one of them could re-establish man's true relation with God. Otherwise, there would have been no need to repeat it: it would only have been necessary to apply over and over again the virtue of the one sacrifice which had made complete atonement.

v. 3. But the sacrifices repeated year by year served to keep alive the sense of sin as a present burden. This was indeed what they were intended to do.

v. 4. The inadequacy of the Levitical sacrifices is shown also by their nature: for the offering of the lives of beasts, which have no true fellowship with man, could not take away man's sins, or release him from the power and burden of them.

vv. 5–10. Wherefore, when Christ came into our nature, He came to offer the perfect sacrifice—to render the perfect service, which had been imagined and prophesied of by a Psalmist of old (see Ps. xl.) in words which could only be uttered with perfect truth by Christ. He knew that God wanted, not the sacrifice of animals, but the offering of man himself, manifested in perfect obedience to His will, and therefore He came to render this obedience.

v. 9. Thus He does away with the offering of outward sacrifices, and offers Himself to fulfil the divine will.

v. 10. We ought to be able by this time to see the meaning of the language in which the apostle goes on to describe the result of Christ's offering to us. 'In which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.' The body or humanity of Jesus Christ was that in which and through which His offering for all men was made possible. For through it He makes Himself one with all men—He becomes the life of the whole race. Hence in the divine will which was realized in the perfect life of the Son of Man, i.e. in God's purpose of love for man, which was never fulfilled before, but is perfectly fulfilled by Christ, every member of the human race was henceforth included.

vv. 11–14. The efficacy of Christ's sacrifice is seen through His present condition of sovereignty. Whereas the Levitical priests stood 'day by day ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, the which can never take away sins, He, when He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God, henceforward expecting till His enemies be made the footstool of His feet. For by one offering'—the perfect offering of Himself—'he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.' The contrast is between the priests of old, whose attitude and offerings showed that they had ever more service to render, and Christ, Who by His one sacrifice has won all that is to be won; has won His kingdom and therefore has taken His seat on His throne. From that throne He reigns, supremely victorious. All that remains to be accomplished now is the subjugation of His enemies. That is how the case is put in Old Testament language, where it implied no doubt subjugation by force, such as men were accustomed to in earthly kingdoms. We can translate it into Christian language, and say that Christ is waiting till the wills of men who are not yet doing God's will, but are opposed to it, shall have, through the inflowing of Christ's life into them, become able to do God's will and give themselves wholly to God, as Christ does. 'For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified,' i.e. by the offering of Himself, through which He fulfilled man's

destiny and bore and conquered all that had held men back from it, He gained for all men the life which has sanctified and will sanctify all who, as time goes on, realize and make their own what has been theirs potentially ever since Christ's sacrifice was completed.

vv. 15–18. Hence in and through Christ is the fulfilment of the prophetic description of the new covenant, of which the writer spoke at the beginning of his exposition of Christ's high-priestly work—the covenant in which all past sins can be blotted out of God's remembrance, and sinners treated as though they had not sinned: for now in Christ is the power which has actually conquered sin completely, and through which all men can conquer their own sins and give themselves in obedient and loving service to God. This having been accomplished, there is no need of any other offering for sin. Christ is all-sufficient.

That concludes the long exposition of the high priesthood of Christ (chaps. vii. 1–x. 18). The rest of the Epistle is concerned with the application of the truths which have been laid down. We can end with the summary of what the author has tried to teach, which is practically contained in the opening verses of the last part of the Epistle, beyond which we need not go.

x. 19–22. 'Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter'—or, use the entrance—'into the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by the way which he dedicated'—or, inaugurated—'for us, a new and living way through the veil, that is to say (the way of) his flesh; and having a great high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our body washed with pure water.' Thus he sums up his teaching by saying that Jesus is (1) our way through the veil, and (2) our great high priest over the house of God.

(1) *The Man Christ Jesus, or the Humanity of Christ, is our Way through the Veil.*—He is this continually for us all. The writer does not say there is no veil between us and God. That would be, alas! to contradict the experience of us all. For we very often do things and think things which cause a

veil between us and God. All deliberate selfishness does this; it prevents us from seeing the vision of God which would be otherwise ours, and from being in union with Him. You who know what it is to live in close union with God are far more conscious than most people of veils which hide Him from you at times, and which you have made yourselves. But the teaching of this Epistle is that Christ, all-loving and ever present with us all, is at all times the way for us through these veils. Whenever we feel overcome by temptations to selfishness, He says to us, 'Here is my life; take, eat, this is the human life which was given for you, which has conquered all selfishness; make it your own, and through it realize, as I do, what it is to have passed beyond the power of selfishness into the life of love.' This goes on all through this life. By means of Christ's life given to and assimilated by us, we are to pass through every veil, or every fold of the one veil, which is between us and God, until at last we are in such a condition that no more veils can ever come between us and God, and we see God as He is. As we pass through fold after fold of it, the light from the holy of holies gets stronger, and that encourages us to make more effort to pass through the next fold.

(2) *Jesus Christ is our Great High Priest in Heaven, our Intercessor, our Advocate.*—His presence in heaven is the perfect intercession for all men, for in Him God sees humanity as a whole—the entire redeemed race. When Christ speaks of preparing places in heaven for us, He means that because He is there all the race is there potentially, we among them, in our places—in our perfection. Thus it can be said that He is the king Who has already won His kingdom; for in Him the power is in existence, in act, by which we can all become perfect sons of God. The individual perfection of each one of us is now actually in Christ in heaven. Nothing more needs to be won for us. All that is necessary is that we should accept what Christ has won for us, and ourselves make it our own with our own wills, so that we may be in actual fact what God already sees us to be potentially in Christ.

Thus Christ is our representative. He presents us to the

Father as parts of His own humanity, or, in the case of Christians, as already sharers in His own Sonship. He is our intercessor, in that His presence in heaven pleads for us as belonging to Him, as meant to fill the places He has prepared in His own body, as being either actual sons of God, who are gradually learning what the true life of sonship implies, or as potential sons, as they are who are not yet Christians.

And 'if any man sin,' as S. John says, we have Him, Jesus Christ the righteous, as our advocate with the Father, i.e. because of the perfect righteousness of His humanity, God can look on us when we sin, not merely as sinners, but as in process of becoming righteous, through the power which is ours in Christ. We can get a faint illustration of this from the way we can regard sinful women when they first come to live with you Sisters. We look on them, not as the degraded creatures they are, but as the purified, remade people they will be presently. We can do this, because we have had it proved to us over and over again that there is a sufficient force of the righteousness of Christ ministered to them here, through the love and care and teaching they get from the Sisters, to transform them. This gives a faint idea of how God can regard us even now while we are in our sins, because He has Christ, the perfect representative of our race, with Him doing His will always, and sees in Him the power in actual existence by which each man and woman in the race can become holy. And as your belief in the sinners who come here helps them, almost forces them, to become holy, so the belief God has in us because of Christ, when we realize it, is the great compelling force leading us to holiness.

The Coming of the Ascended Christ

' From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead ' (Apostles' Creed).

' And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead : whose kingdom shall have no end ' (Nicene Creed).

' From whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead ' (Athanasian Creed).

The coming of the ascended Christ of which the Creeds here speak seems to have been expected by most of the New Testament writers as a sudden catastrophic coming of the Messiah upon the clouds with His angels to bring the present world to an end, and to establish the new and glorious kingdom of which Old Testament prophets and seers had spoken. They expected also that this coming would take place speedily, in the lifetime of some of their own generations. These expectations had arisen, it is evident, from our Lord's own teaching on the subject combined with that of the sacred literature of their own nation.

The question is much debated now whether our Lord's teaching and expectations were as they supposed, or whether the apostles and evangelists read into His teaching the ideas about the coming of the Messianic kingdom with which their minds were undoubtedly filled, and so to a large extent mistook His meaning.

There is much to be said on both sides, and it is good that we should follow the debate so far as we have opportunity, thoughtfully and prayerfully : for it will no doubt help us at last if not at first to gain deeper insight into the meaning of the teaching of our Lord.

Meanwhile there is abundant evidence which enables us to see what the coming of Christ has actually been from the apostles' time till now. And it is very profitable and inspiring to study this, especially because of all that it shows us of what Christ's coming actually is now, and therefore of what it is to be in the future.

The Creeds speak only of the final coming which will be the consummation of all Christ's previous comings to this world since

His Ascension, and thereby encourage us to study the nature of His coming by means of all the present evidence we possess. The chief passages which appear to teach that Christ's coming was to be final, catastrophic, and was near at hand are the following :—S. Matt. xvi. 27 f. ; xxiv. ; xxvi. 63 f. ; S. Mark xiii. ; S. Luke xvii. 22–37 ; xxi. ; S. John i. 50 f. ; 1 Thess. iv. 13–17 ; 2 Thess. i., ii. ; 1 Cor. vii. 29–31 ; 1 S. Pet. iv. 7 ; S. Jas. v. 1–9 ; cf. Rom. xiii. 11 f. ; Phil. iv. 5 ; 1 Cor. xvi. 22 ; Heb. x. 25, 37 ; 1 S. John ii. 18 ; Rev. i. 7 ; xx. 20.

We have come now to the last clauses in the second part of the Creed.

The chief descriptions of the coming again of Christ in the Gospels not only resemble but are largely taken word for word from the descriptions of the coming of the Messianic kingdom in Daniel[1] and in the Apocalyptic literature which was produced after the close of the canon of the Old Testament, and before or at the same time as the rise of Christianity. The minds of most religious Jews must have been steeped in this literature when our Lord came. The proclamation of S. John the Baptist, followed afterwards by our Lord's, 'the kingdom of heaven is at hand!' must have been associated at once in the minds of his and Christ's disciples with the catastrophic view of the universe and of the coming of the kingdom with which this literature is filled. Their expectation was that the coming of Messiah in His kingdom would mean the end of the world, a final day of judgment, the establishment once for all of a glorious kingdom which should rule over all others; and that the signs amidst which Messiah would come, with ten thousands of His saints and angels, would be the darkening of sun and moon, the falling of stars from heaven, &c., i.e. the end of the whole system of the world as it had been known hitherto. The Apocalyptic literature which produced these expectations has mostly been rediscovered in our own age. It affords important new evidence for the understanding of the Gospels.

The question which is being eagerly debated now is whether our Lord's mind was also influenced by this litera-

[1] Chap. vii.

ture to such an extent that He expected His own coming to agree literally with those descriptions of it, so that His coming and the inauguration of His kingdom, which He said was to take place in the lifetime of some of His hearers,[1] would mean the end of the world and the final judgment; or whether He knew the truth about it, but saw that He must teach of it as the fulfilment of the prophecies which had gone before, leaving His disciples to find out by experience that their fulfilment was not literal; or again, whether they read into His teaching the ideas with which their minds were filled, and so misreported it; or whether there is any explanation of the difficulty which is not yet discovered.

The difficulty certainly is considerable, for it seems evident that the evangelists or the apostles who supplied them with information understood our Lord to mean that His coming was to be soon, and to be the final catastrophe for this world. And therefore men are saying 'either our Lord knew the truth about His coming or He did not: if He did, then how was it that He gave His disciples such a false impression of it; if He did not, then how are we to consider Him an infallible teacher?' This is apt to disturb people's faith, if it is in an inchoate condition and does not depend, as yours does, on daily intimate intercourse with our Lord.

There was a similar difficulty some years ago. When critics first seemed to have proved that David did not write Ps. cx., though our Lord appeared to say he did, or that the story of Jonah was only a parable, though our Lord appeared to have treated it as history, then men said in like manner, 'either our Lord knew the truth about this or He did not: if He did, then He seems to have been basing arguments on what He knew to be false; or if He did not, how can we consider Him an infallible teacher?' But by this time we have all discovered that these are not the only alternatives, and we see nothing disturbing or even surprising in our Lord's words, even when it is granted that the critics are right about the Psalm and Jonah. So it will be no doubt before long with the present difficulty.

[1] S. Mark xiii. 30; S. Matt. xvi. 28.

A very important factor in the case is the nature of His coming as it has actually been manifested from the time of his Resurrection till now. And the study of this is most important for us at all times, quite apart from its importance in the present controversy. For His coming is our life actually now and at all times, and contains the possibility of new and perfect life for all men.

Let us consider first the nature of our Lord's coming to His disciples at Pentecost and afterwards, as the history in the Acts of the Apostles sets it before us, although to do so we must anticipate what more rightly belongs to lectures on the third part of the Creed. We said before that our Lord's breathing on the apostles at Easter and saying 'receive Holy Spirit' was the most wonderful thing that had ever happened in the history of man, except our Lord's Incarnation.[1] On the Day of Pentecost that miracle was made complete, so to speak, and was for the first time manifested to the world.[2] It was not merely a coming again to the disciples of the ascended Christ: it was a coming of Him, or His Spirit, to fill them with His own heavenly life—to make them not merely infant but grown-up partakers of it. The Day of Pentecost therefore meant in the truest sense the coming of Christ's kingdom—the beginning of the reign of the ascended Christ in fallen humanity. The kingdom came suddenly,[3] and it was the inauguration of an entirely new state of things. It was heaven brought to earthly people, or the lifting up of them into heaven. It meant the fulfilment of Jacob's dream of the ladder, to which our Lord no doubt referred in His interview with Nathaniel.[4] It was the beginning of the turning of the world upside down. No language can be too strong to express the tremendous nature of the change it caused. We are so accustomed now to the thought of our Lord's giving us His life that it is very difficult for us to realize how marvellous a gift it is—what it really means that sinful beings like us should be given a share, here and now, in the perfect divine life of love which Christ lives in heaven. Yet

[1] See pp. 148 *et seq.*
[2] Acts ii. 1–13.
[3] Acts ii. 3.
[4] S. John i. 50 f.

a fuller realization of it would mean to us all a vast increase of faith in Christ and therefore of spiritual power for our work. The apostles realized very vividly that a tremendous, world-changing, all-important miracle had been wrought in them and would continue to be wrought. Hence their extraordinary confidence and success. I believe that in time the present controversy, by fixing our minds on the description of our Lord's coming in the Gospels, will help us greatly to realize more vividly what the present daily coming of our Lord to us means, and so to work much more effectually in the confidence which the apostles had that we can do all things through Him Who strengtheneth us. For, when once it is admitted that the language of the Gospels which describes the coming of Christ is symbolical, then it is seen that most of it describes what has actually happened and is happening with great accuracy.

This becomes more and more clear as we follow the history of the first few years of the Church's life as it is set forth in the Acts, which takes us almost up to the Fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Let us review shortly the chief events in this history.

The great event of the Day of Pentecost was followed by a very rapid growth of the Church or extension of Christ's reign.[1] This showed plainly that an entirely new power or life had come to men from heaven. The very people who had rejected Christ and had shouted for His crucifixion two months ago now flocked into His Church, though He was out of sight and though the danger of professing to be His disciples was very great. The apostles themselves were evidently new men—their centre was changed from earth to heaven. They no longer feared what men could do unto them. The life they were living was quite a new one: it had come to them from above, suddenly; and Christ's former enemies, seeing this, desired to share in it at any cost. Their earthly possessions seemed no longer of value to them as before. 'Not one of them said that aught of the things he possessed was his own . . . as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought

[1] Acts ii. 14–iv. 37.

the prices of the things that were sold and laid them at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need.' A new spirit had entered into them—the Spirit of Christ who had conquered all selfishness and lived only for others. The new life of love was taking possession of them and driving out the old life of self, at any rate for the present No greater change can ever come to man than this. Nothing more wonderful can ever happen to him than that the life of God Himself should be given him to transform and replace his old selfish life.

Nevertheless the new life acted upon man by no mechanical process.[1] It came as a gift—the greatest possible gift—and man had to accept or refuse it. It could only become his life if he chose to accept it and live by it. Hence the coming of Christ was a coming to judgment: its effect was to divide men into two flocks. The story of Ananias and his wife, inserted in the midst of the account of the rapid growth of Christ's Church, depicts very vividly the tremendous nature of this judgment—the absolute contrast between the life of the 'new man' and of the old.

The meaning and effect of Christ's coming is shown next[2] in the short history of S. Stephen, who was 'full of the Holy Ghost,' i.e. of Christ's life. Christ's life was manifested through him, though he was not one of the original body but a new man—a Hellenist. Through him the Church may be said to have made, though unconsciously, the beginning of the movement which was before long to issue in its complete deliverance from the trammels of Judaism into the wide freedom of the Catholic Church. The result of Stephen's holiness and spiritual power was a great increase of the Church on the one hand, and on the other bitter opposition resembling that against Christ Himself. This also, therefore, was a coming of Christ for judgment, the purpose of which judgment can be seen vividly in its effect on S. Paul. At first it stirred up all that was hard and bitter in him, and made him a more fierce persecutor than ever, but afterwards it prepared his heart to receive Christ when He appeared to him.

[1] Acts v. [2] *Ibid.* vi. and vii.

The coming of Christ to the Samaritans is related next.[1] This happened through Philip and was a very wonderful event. For the Jews had no dealings with Samaritans—hated them as worse than infidels. A short time ago the Samaritans had refused to receive Jesus because He was going to Jerusalem. But now when Philip went to them 'preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Christ, they were baptized both men and women.' Simon also, the great magician, who had hitherto amazed the Samaritans with his sorceries, was overcome by Christ's life manifested in Philip, and was baptized. The story is so familiar that it is hard to realize how vividly it shows the power of Christ's life to change men utterly—to turn the world upside down—to bring heaven to earth, or to uplift the earthly into heaven. The conversion and baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch, related in the same chapter, afford more evidence of the same truth. Such conversion of men is so familiar an experience to us now that we find it hard to realize the wonder of it ; for example, miracles of physical healing have been considered for ages in the Church as much greater proofs of the power of Christ than spiritual healing and conversion, though in comparison with the latter they are as nothing.

The conversion of S. Paul comes next,[2] and it illustrates very clearly several aspects of the coming of Christ. Christ came to him suddenly, in a moment, and he was a changed man from that moment. He at once put himself on Christ's side quite definitely, who had been before as definitely opposed to Him. Yet Christ's coming to him was also a long and continuous process : it took a long time to win the whole man (even when he was near the end of his life on earth he was liable to sudden outbursts of the old fiery temper [3]). But from the time of his baptism he was a new man—Paul not Saul. The change in him was from one life to another—from earth to heaven—from self-love to love.

The first coming of Christ to the Gentiles [4] was as sudden, wonderful, and unexpected as that of the Day of Pentecost

[1] Acts viii.
[2] *Ibid.* ix.
[3] E.g. Acts xxiii. 1–5.
[4] Acts x.

itself. It was as truly the direct act of God, as truly a coming of Christ from heaven. And it was His first proclamation in act that His kingdom is for all men; that His coming is to all men, not merely to His own chosen race, in which He Himself had been born. This coming of Christ to be the Saviour of the whole world had probably never been consciously expected by anyone. Jewish prophets had foreshadowed it. S. Peter had used words in his speech on the Day of Pentecost which pointed to it;[1] but his future actions showed that he had not realized the truth yet, that all men are to be one in Christ Jesus.[2] Our Lord was not yet recognized as having come in His true kingdom. He was only now beginning to raise His disciples above the idea that He was coming 'to restore again the kingdom to Israel,' and to enable them to realize that His human kingdom is commensurate with the whole human race. The history goes on to show the next steps which led towards the establishment on earth of His kingdom in its true or catholic aspect.

S. Luke next narrates[3] how S. Peter convinced the disciples at Jerusalem, who had accused Him of eating with uncircumcized men, that it was at God's command He did it; so that they exclaimed with great astonishment, but also with joy (thanks to the life of Christ in them), 'then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life.' They were, however, as yet far from realizing that Christ had founded a Catholic Church.

S. Paul's first missionary journey[4] resulted in the coming of Christ to Gentiles in many places and the establishment of Christian Churches in them in spite of vigorous opposition from Jews.

After narrating the different events by which God had shown His intention of coming to the Gentiles as well as to Jews, S. Luke goes on[5] to describe the Council at Jerusalem, at which the Church decided that it was Christ's intention to admit Gentiles directly to His Church without requiring them to belong to the Jewish Church beforehand. This

[1] Acts ii. 39. [2] E.g. Gal. ii. 11–13.
[3] Acts xi. [4] *Ibid.* xiii., xiv. [5] *Ibid.* xv.

was a very great step in the manifestation of the truth about Christ's kingdom. Yet, plain as the sentence of the Council was, it did not establish the truth, but appears in history merely as one important step leading towards the establishment of it.

The rest of the Acts[1] is almost wholly taken up with the extension of Christ's Church among the Gentiles, chiefly through the apostle Paul—his second and third missionary journeys, his journey to Jerusalem, his trials there and at Cæsarea, his voyage to Rome and sojourn there at the centre of the civilized world. It is the history of the wonderful coming of Christ to the Gentiles; it shows how very great was the power of His life given from heaven; how rapidly new Churches were planted so that they grew of themselves by the power of Christ's life which was in them. What a story it is which the Acts tells! That of the river of the water of life proceeding from the throne of God and the Lamb, rushing into the different countries, breaking down all barriers between rich and poor, learned and ignorant, Jew and Samaritan and Gentile, fertilizing and producing new and wonderful forms of beauty in the old dry soil of humanity: making all things new. To us in India the history of the Acts become more amazing each year. We marvel at the rapid growth; at the planting of new Churches, which grew from the force of life within them and showed wonderful spiritual fruit in the bad soil—in heathen, wicked, idolatrous cities and districts; and that it was all done in about twenty-five or thirty years! We contrast with it the slow progress of Christianity here. People tell us, no doubt with much truth, that our methods are poor and futile compared with S. Paul's. But the real way of accounting for the contrast is that in those days the apostles and their fellow workers were filled with the Holy Ghost—the life of Christ—and knew that they were, and therefore were sure that anything was possible. This new life was new in the world—it was the all-victorious life of Christ: of course it could transform mankind and make all things new! If we—the whole Church—had the

[1] Chap. xvi.–xxviii.

same faith and enthusiasm that the infant Church had, the same marvellous results would follow. But we are accustomed to the coming of Christ, have to a large extent ceased to wonder at it, and therefore do not realize or believe in the transforming power of His life as they did.

The history of the Acts brings us to A.D. 62, probably (authorities differ a good deal as to the exact dates), i.e. to within a few years of the Fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. This great event may be said to end the first period of the history of Christ's Church, for which the Acts is our chief authority ; to mark a new beginning in the world's history, and to be a special fulfilment of the teaching of the Gospels as to the coming of Christ. Let us try to imagine the effect of it (*a*) on the Jewish nation and (*b*) for the world.

(*a*) The great siege of Jerusalem lasted a hundred and forty-three days. The city was crowded when it began by visitors for the Passover. At the end of the siege the inhabitants were nearly all killed, the city was burnt down, the Temple was destroyed, and the few survivors were either made victims at the games at Cæsarea or carried captive to Rome. 'The Jewish system perished in blood and fire.'[1] It meant the entire destruction of the Jewish Church with its Temple. The whole system begun through Moses, in which all the highest hopes of the best of the nation had always centred, had gone for ever ! The Temple worship had permanently ceased. How can we imagine what this meant to the Jews—or even to the Jewish Christian Church ! All their old hopes of the kingdom—hopes the Jews had lived on as a nation throughout their history—were gone ! Christ had not come as they thought 'to restore again the kingdom to Israel' ! They had to face a new world in which the Jewish system was not ! It was indeed to them as though the sun were darkened, and the moon did not give her light, as though the stars had fallen from heaven and the powers of heaven were shaken—all that they had hitherto trusted to for light and power from heaven was gone. For, as we have seen, even the apostles—*a fortiori* the rest of the Jewish Christians—had never been

[1] Hastings, *Dict. of the Bible*. 'Jerusalem.'

able to realize that Christ's Church and kingdom was not the Jewish Church and kingdom glorified and filled with new life. S. Paul seems to have been the one man who did from the first; the writer of Hebrews did also afterwards. That the rest of the Church might realize what Christ's coming in His kingdom means, the fall of Jerusalem was necessary. Nothing less, it seems, could have revealed the truth to them.

(*b*) Its effect on the rest of the Empire was to make it plain at last that the Christian Church was not a mere dissenting sect of the Jewish Church, as had hitherto been supposed. It gradually appeared as a new creation, not dependent on the Jewish nation or Church in which it had begun, and as having a new and strange power of its own, the secret of which was not plain. This power was despised at first, but less and less so as time went on, until at last it was feared as a danger to the Roman State. Then the might and the cunning of the Empire was put forth against this new and spiritual kingdom, but nothing was found which could prevail against it. The worst persecutions only increased it. It grew in power and dominion, until at last it was seen that the whole might of the Roman Empire must succumb before it.

The Fall of Jerusalem, therefore, meant a fresh coming of Christ to mankind in general, sudden yet continuous and gradual. It brought the revelation of the truth of His kingdom which had not been realized before. It was also a coming for judgment. It stirred up into active opposition all the evil force of the Roman Empire, that it might be seen as evil and gradually overcome. It marked the beginning of the fall of the force of physical power and riches, as well as that of the heathen deities, oracles, witchcraft, charms, and mysteries to which men had hitherto trusted for light. It meant therefore to the Gentiles as to the Jews the beginning of the darkening of the sun and moon, the falling of the stars, the shaking of the powers of heaven that had been spoken of in the Gospels. And remember that all this is the plain and true account of it, although the powers of the world, the flesh and the devil,

were not demolished completely by it at once, and are not demolished yet. The kingdom had come. It was the coming of the Stronger-One who had conquered the strong. Satan had fallen from heaven before Christ. The old things had passed away essentially and all things had been made new, though the processes through which Christ's victory is manifested to men on earth are what we call gradual and complicated and lengthy.

Since that time there have been very many 'days of Christ,' which have been so many manifestations of the fact that Christ's kingdom has come once for all, whose power is in its essence victorious over all other powers. Of all the comings of Christ hitherto none could be so vivid to *us* as the one we are witnessing now during this war. All Christ's comings are comings to judgment, as we said, because they are comings for man's salvation. So in this case. The gradual growth of Christ's kingdom in the world has stirred up fierce opposition always: it did so in the Roman Empire and produced the persecutions. It has been doing so in our own day, in which there has been more love manifested on the earth in general than ever before, but in which the opposite spirit of antichrist has become so fierce as at last to produce this war. This spirit is that of men who trust to physical force, money and earthly wealth of all kinds: the spirit of greed, lust, self-love with its many manifestations, 'enmities, strife, jealousies, wrath, factions, divisions, heresies, envyings,' as well as 'uncleanness, lasciviousness, drunkenness, revellings, and such like.'[1] And the two spirits or kingdoms of Christ and antichrist have now met visibly in a tremendous struggle. If we who believe in Christ are faithful to Him, we shall witness in our day a very great triumph of Christ over His enemies. The peoples of Europe will see as never before that the things which most men still trust to for light, and life, and satisfaction—money and the power of enjoyment which money can procure—are impotent to give men life. There will again be a veritable darkening of sun and moon and falling of stars from heaven—a shaking

[1] Gal. v. 19, 20.

and overturning of the world powers to which men have trusted, and a new establishment of Christ's kingdom on their ruins. Men and women of many countries will realize anew the essential powerlessness of all things which are not of Christ's kingdom, and the power of all that is His, and therefore will let Him in to reign in their hearts. But if this happens, for which we hope and pray, then it will only be another manifestation of what really happened when Christ's kingdom 'came' to the world during the period between Pentecost and the Fall of Jerusalem.

The coming of Christ to mankind in general is but His coming to a large number of individuals, one by one. Therefore the story of His coming to anyone of these, if we know it well, affords for us the best kind of manifestation of the nature of His coming. We tried to see this in the case of S. Paul. But the case which each of us knows best is his own case. If we look back, we can probably remember when Christ first came so that He made His presence and power felt in our hearts—when He began His reign there. It was no doubt a sudden coming, though perhaps we did not realize till afterwards what had happened, and though the results of the coming have been manifested only gradually ever since. Here is the story of one whom I happen to know very intimately When he was an undergraduate at Oxford, he went over to Cuddesdon College one Sunday to see a friend. He was much struck by what he saw there—by the change that seemed to have taken place in men whom he had known previously at Oxford. And at the end of the day he went to Compline in the chapel, and there the great thing happened which was to change the whole course of his life. He was not conscious of anything but a beautiful chapel filled with men in white surplices singing Compline before a gleaming altar, and of a very vivid sensation that he was not fit to be there: he felt as though he were polluting this white-robed company. That sensation remained afterwards on his way back to Oxford, and much to his annoyance came back again when he woke up next morning and many following mornings. He saw what it meant—that he ought to give

up his sins, especially the worst of them. But he did not want to do this, and therefore fought hard against the new force which had manifested itself in him. He kept up the fight for several years. (The story is in no way to his credit.) But gradually the new force prevailed: he could not withstand it permanently, and at last he found himself back again at Cuddesdon as a theological student, which was about the last thing he had ever expected to be. And as he looks back, he sees that this same force within him has in the years since then been urging him to do more and more things that the flesh rebelled against, and in spite of vigorous opposition on his part has still gradually prevailed. As he gets older, though he becomes more and more conscious of his own extraordinary weakness and ingratitude, he becomes more and more confident that this force will ultimately prevail over even his multiform selfishness. Such is my friend's story. Does it not illustrate very vividly what the coming of Christ is? Does it not remind most of us that the coming of Christ to ourselves has been of a similar nature? Think also of the bad women who have been here In how many cases can we say, as we look back, that Christ came to them suddenly on a certain day, and all the gradual process of reformation which has gone on since has but manifested the fact that He did so? All these comings to individuals have been also comings to judgment; they have stirred up the evil in them, made life harder than it was before—a harder fight for them all. And we can see even now the purpose of this—that they might see the evil as evil: trample it under foot through the power of Christ, and surrender themselves in loving and glad obedience to Him Whose coming has at last been to them the manifestation of the eternal love of God.

The above illustrations, which show that the coming of Christ, whether to mankind in general or to individuals, is a sudden coming once for all, the power and effect of which is, however, manifested gradually, point thereby to the great, all-embracing gospel of His coming, for they appear to show that His coming is finally—essentially—

irresistible, however long men or nations may stand up against it. If we think again of what has happened in our own lives, we shall see this. Christ came to us, as we can see now on looking back, once for all; we have resisted Him, forgotten Him, tried hard to go our own way over and over again; but the force of His presence within us has not allowed us to do this, except for a time. He has always won in the end, and is in process of winning fresh victories in us now. The force of our own selfishness, great and many-headed as it was and still is, has been again and again subdued by the force of His love; it is being subdued now. So has it been with nations. So it is happening now with the warring nations. The fight may be long or short, as we reckon, in different cases, but already it is seen that Christ can be—has been—victorious in all kinds of men and women and over all kinds of selfishness, even in its most hideous and violent forms. Can we not then rise to the height of believing that at last Christ will be able to subdue all things unto Himself; that on earth we only see a few samples of what Christ can ultimately effect; that His love will at last be victorious in the hearts of all men of all nations? Can we not believe that the teaching of our Lord and His apostles on the subject is true?—'all authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth'; 'he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet'; 'for our citizenship is in heaven, from whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation . . . according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself.' 'He gave him to be head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all' (read the whole passages of which these are the concluding words);[1] 'I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself.' (Read also Rom. v., viii. The whole New Testament abounds with assurances of the victorious power of Christ over all sin and death.)

[1] S. Matt. xxviii. 18; 1 Cor. xv. 24–28; Phil. iii. 20, 21; Eph. i. 15–23; S. John xii. 32.

Let us go back now to the teaching of our Lord on the subject as it is reported in the Gospels, bearing in mind what we have seen about His actual comings as they have been manifested in history.

The passages which have caused the most perplexity are S. Matt. xvi. 27, 28; xxiv. 29, 31; xxvi. 64; and the parallel passages in the other Gospels. The teaching of these passages is that the kingdom that they had all been looking for—the Messianic kingdom—would shortly come, within the lifetime of many who were then listening; that its coming would be in some way closely connected with the Fall of Jerusalem, which our Lord predicted; that at its coming the light of the sun and the moon and the stars would be darkened, the powers of the heavens would be shaken, and then would be seen the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory; and that this would cause a universal judgment of all men, i.e. a separation between the good and the evil, in which the good would be seen to have eternal life and the evil to be without it. Now it is often said in these days, even by many eminent and orthodox divines, that our Lord when He taught this was misled by the language of the Jewish prophets and seers, and supposed, as His disciples did, that the coming of His kingdom, which was to be immediately, meant the end of the world—a literal collapse of the physical universe as it was then thought of, and the establishment of His kingdom at once on the ruins of it; and that then would take place the final judgment of all men, i.e. within a few years or perhaps months or even days of His own death, when He came again. And some divines have gone on from this to point out that therefore our Lord's ethical teaching, such as that of the Sermon on the Mount, was not meant for men living in the condition in which we are, but was only *interim-ethik*, just meant for a race which would end its present earthly life almost at once in that generation. Many think that, in the immediate future, controversy concerning the truth about our Lord's person will find its storm centre in His teaching about His coming, as formerly it was found in His miracles.

Hence it seems very important to consider the matter carefully, and to do so we ought in the first place to distinguish between what our Lord's human mind actually knew of things in general, and what He knew or saw about the things He taught as truth. We most of us realize now that our Lord's human knowledge was limited, that He was ignorant of very many facts that we know now. We do not any longer suppose, as our ancestors did, that the whole future history of the world was before our Lord's mind during His ministry; but we are only concerned here with what He taught as the truth of God, and we must bear in mind His oft-repeated assurances according to S. John, such as 'My teaching is not mine but his that sent me,' 'for I spake not from myself, but the Father which sent me he hath given me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak,' &c.[1] Now those assurances are at least sufficient to make us hesitate before we acquiesce in the view that our Lord was entirely mistaken in His teaching about His kingdom and His coming. For, remember, the mistake (if it had been a mistake) would have been not merely as to a fact, but concerning the fundamental nature of His kingdom, a mistake therefore of most tremendous import. He is supposed to have expected that the coming of His kingdom was not only to be sudden, but complete at once: that it would be established once for all when the great world convulsion happened, and that all who were outside it then would remain outside it for ever. But this would have meant that it was not a kingdom at all like the one He has actually established; that it was not, for example, a Catholic kingdom for all men, but for only a select few; and that it was a kingdom which could be established by the same kind of force—though by a much more wonderful manifestation of it—as that by which human kingdoms, the kingdoms of this world, are established. He is supposed to have taught this, Who was trying to show all through His ministry that His kingdom was not of this world, not at all like any kingdom of this

[1] S. John vii. 16; viii. 28; xii. 49; xiv. 10, 24; iii. 11, 32; and cf. S. Matt. vii. 28, 29; S. Mark i. 22.

world, but a purely spiritual kingdom ; and He Who ' knew what was in man,' Who knew by experience, even apart from the visions He received from God, the difficulty of changing men's minds and persuading them to let Him in ; He Who must have known that the only way in which His kingdom could be established was by persuading men to let Him into their hearts and make His life their own ; He Who had always refused to show ' signs ' to compel men to come to Him because they were of no avail, is said to have expected either that the kingdom was to be established apart from His reign in men's hearts, or that their hearts would be changed all at once by the tremendous physical catastrophe which was impending. If our Lord had made the mistake He is said to have made, it would therefore have been a mistake of the gravest kind both as to the nature of His kingdom and the nature of man, and it is not too much to say that the teaching of these passages would contradict almost all the rest of our Lord's teaching about His kingdom as well as all the manifestations He gave of wonderful spiritual insight as to man's nature which are recorded in that teaching. It is therefore extremely difficult to see why this view is held by so many whose names and learning win men's respect, unless they think that the words about the sun and the moon and the stars being darkened *must* be taken literally of the sun and the moon and the stars which are up in the sky ! (There seems no other way out of the difficulty, except to suppose that they have not considered what would have been involved in the mistake our Lord is said to have made.)

But our Lord is using language in these passages which had often been used before by Jewish prophets and seers : e.g. Isa. xiii. ; xxiv. 21–23 ; Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8 ; Joel ii. 10, 11, 28–32 ; iii. 14, 15 ; cf. Amos v. 18–20. Its use in our New Testament Apocalypse is the same.[1] If you look at all those passages, you will see that it is impossible to suppose the writers of them meant their words to be understood literally. They meant evidently that the ' day of the Lord ' when it came would mean that all that men—

[1] Rev. vi. 12–17 ; viii. 12.

earthly men, the 'tribes of the earth'—had trusted to hitherto as most secure, would be seen to fail and would appear to bring no light or comfort: they would look for light and comfort where they used to look for it and find that it was not there. If it was used of His own coming by our Lord in this sense, then it is a very complete and accurate description of the effect of His coming on the 'tribes of the earth.' This is also the case with all our Lord's other teaching about His coming, when once it is granted that He is teaching by symbol. Take, for example, S. Matt. xxvi. 64. Again, it is important to remember that when our Lord said to the High Priest 'hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven,' He did not say that the High Priest would understand the meaning of what he saw—that it was the Son of Man coming. He might have been and probably was among those of whom our Lord often spoke, who having eyes see not and do not understand. Neither the Church nor the world in general understood at first the meaning of the coming of Christ, though what they actually witnessed was His coming: just as we ourselves did not know when our Lord first came to reign in our hearts—probably did not understand at all that that was what had happened. And in the same way when He said to His disciples, 'then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory,' He did not say and there is no reason to suppose He meant that 'they' would understand the meaning of what had happened. It is far more probable that those whom our Lord said had not understood the signs given hitherto would not understand this one. They would mourn because all they had trusted to hitherto was failing. But it is pointed out that Christ's disciples evidently had this apocalyptic idea of His coming, and that they as evidently gathered it from His teaching. And it is asked, why did our Lord allow this if that was not what He meant? Why did He teach by symbol in this way, instead of plainly? Well, that is a

part of the further question, why did He teach by parable and symbol at all? If you look at the Gospels you will see that all His main teaching is by parable or symbol or, as we call it, by metaphorical language, not only to the multitudes but also to His disciples;[1] and even we can see at least some of the reasons why He taught like that. In the first place, such teaching stimulates people to make an effort to see the truth, and no one can gain the truth—i.e. assimilate it, make it his own—until he has struggled with all his might to gain it. Our Lord's teaching by parable and symbol therefore was not to hide the truth from people but to enable them to gain it in the only way by which men can gain it. Again, but this is only really another way of looking at the same thing, symbolic language is by far the best medium for teaching universal truths—truths as they are as distinct from their partial or gradual manifestations in time; and the truth about Christ's kingdom and coming is such. It is a great universal truth, and Christ wished to teach it in its essence, not as it would appear to any one generation of men, but as it is in itself. If we think how the kingdom has actually come hitherto and the effects of its coming, and that the final coming will be the last of all the other comings, when the race of men shall have reached its full stature—if, that is, we can think of the whole as one coming—can we imagine that any more accurate description could be given of it than these which our Lord is said to have given? The coming is only one, and yet manifold; sudden, yet gradual; present, yet future. It is a coming from heaven, even as S. John saw it—'the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.'[2] Yet it depends on men, in that it can only come to those who are ready and willing to receive it. It is a coming of Christ for salvation; yet the effect of it is to cause judgment—a separation between the good and the evil. It is a coming once for all; yet it is manifested

[1] E.g. S. John iv. 10–14, 32–38; vi. 26–65; vii. 37 f.; viii. 12; x.; xi. 25 f.; xiv. 6; xv. 1–8.

[2] Rev. xxi. 2.

as a continuous coming to countless individuals, each of whom has to be persuaded step by step, in spite of all the temptations that he has from the world, the flesh and the devil, to accept Him who comes as his Saviour and his life, most of whom are not persuaded to do this until after a long and most arduous struggle, which would often no doubt appear hopeless to anyone but our divine Lord. Can we imagine any ordinary language—any kind of language—which would convey all this at once with the same force and truth as the symbolic language which our Lord used?

Let us try to look at this more closely from the standpoint of the teacher Himself, for such point of view is the most important of all, not only for enabling us to arrive at a solution of the difficulty, but for understanding the meaning of our Lord's teaching in this matter. Christ, considered as a teacher, is the ideal *Prophet*, in comparison with Whom all the other great prophets of the world are simply as blind guides: and the work of a prophet is not to predict future events, though he may sometimes be able to do this, but to see and proclaim God's truth as it is in its essence, to see it, so to speak, all at once and not merely as ordinary men will see it presently, when it is manifested gradually through the events in their lives. We cannot doubt that the Man Christ Jesus saw God's truth in this way. In order that He might see it and proclaim it as it is, He kept His soul in constant communion with His Father; He exercised its powers not at all except in obedience to His Father's will.

His one desire at all times was to hear what the Father was saying, to see the visions of truth which His Father manifested to Him, and to proclaim that which He saw and nothing else. 'To this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.' Now we often wonder at the splendid visions of truth which have come to other prophets, or to great musicians or artists or poets or reformers. They evidently see truths as they are (we were thinking some time ago of how S. John did), not merely as most men do, little by little: they see them all at once, so to speak. But how are we to imagine the splendour

and clearness of the visions of truth which came to our Lord —to the soul of Him who never sinned, never went His own way, never taught according to His own fancy, but who could always say while He was teaching, 'I and my Father are one'? It seems impossible to doubt that He saw the truths that He was sent to teach as they are in their eternal essence, and that He saw therefore the nature and essence of His kingdom concerning which His teaching all through His ministry was so abundant and manifold. As in one vision He saw the whole we may well believe: He saw what effect His coming would have on mankind in general, i.e. on man because of what he is—and He described what He saw so far as human language could do it. And remember that to describe a vision of this kind—of truth in its nakedness, in its essence—is a very different thing from describing any partial manifestations of it which men see one by one. Christ had not been sent to predict the future events of the world, but He had been sent to proclaim the nature of His kingdom and the effect of His coming, and therefore the language He uses about it was symbolic, because there is no other language which is adequate at all to express it. When we consider all the greatest people we know of—prophets, artists, poets, musicians—who have seen clear visions of truth, we find that they always felt it necessary to use symbolic language to express what they saw. Think of the visions of the prophets in the Old Testament—Isaiah, for instance, or Ezekiel. Obviously they 'saw visions of God,' for the expression of which symbolical language was their only available medium.

So it has been with all great artists. They have seen visions of truth, and they know that nothing they can do with their hands can express these things adequately. In the old days, in the very early Church, Christians who saw truth very clearly did not dare even to attempt to express it by that which everybody could understand, but only by symbolic art. In the Catacombs, for example, you will see no clear picture of our Lord at all. They did not dare to paint His form; they only painted symbols, such as a lamb standing at an altar, a lamb with pierced side. And

till long after that, as you know, people did not even dare to paint the Madonna as an ordinary woman. Even when they did there was always something symbolic in the faces of the Madonna and Child in all the greatest artists, so long as the heavenly vision of the truth of the Incarnation remained with them. As that died away, the symbolism disappeared, and, though the painting was more perfect than ever, the pictures, e.g. of Andrea del Sarto and Titian contained little but the beauty of a woman and child which could be seen with the eyes. The artists, perfect almost as painters, had ceased to be prophets who saw and tried to proclaim the truth of the Incarnation.

So it has been also with the great poets who have seen 'visions of God.' They find that no plain language will describe what they see, and therefore they employ the medium of poetry. Few people agree in their definitions of what poetry is; but most of us realize either that poetry is essentially symbolic language, or that the necessity which many great men feel of expressing what they see in poetry is the same as that which causes prophets, artists, and musicians to express their visions by symbols. Great poetry therefore leads us to gaze beyond the events which are described as happening in time, to the visions of eternal, timeless truth which the poets saw. Dante, e.g. had clear visions of sin, repentance, and love; he saw them as they are in essence and their essential results: in other words he saw the kingdom of Christ and the results of His coming to men. The 'Divina Commedia' is the series of parables by means of which he tried to describe what he saw. And of all the learned men who expound the great poem and tell us details of the history of the characters named in it, probably only a few have made the great spiritual effort which is necessary in order to see the vision of eternal truth which Dante saw. So too Robert Browning, the greatest poet-prophet of our age, saw visions of the truth as it is, and tried to show how that truth is manifested in divers ways and portions in the lives of men and women in each age. He too can be said to have seen the kingdom of God and the coming of Christ in its essence, and its

essential effects in the world, and he tried to proclaim it and to draw men to God by a long series of parables of human nature. The words he put into the mouth of S. John may perhaps be said to sum up the message he felt called upon to deliver, and did deliver with, so far as we can judge, wonderful effect.

> For life, with all it yields of joy and woe,
> And hope and fear—believe the aged friend—
> Is just our chance o' the prize of learning love,
> How love might be, hath been indeed, and is;
> And that we hold thenceforth to the uttermost
> Such prize despite the envy of the world,
> And, having gained truth, keep truth: that is all.

But his poetry appeals to its readers for effort, not merely mental but great spiritual effort, without which it is impossible for anyone to see the visions of truth which he saw.

It goes almost without saying that all great musicians who 'see visions of God' are in like case. They feel that not plain language but only music can express the essence of what they see.

> But God has a few of us whom He whispers in the ear;
> The rest may reason and welcome: 'tis we musicians know.

So it is also with us preachers, even the least of us. We at times see visions of truth so plainly that it seems as though we could certainly explain them to others in plain language: but when we try to do so, we find it is impossible. We have either to be silent or to resort to parable and symbol, and many of us have to leave most of what we see unexpressed.

If we bear all this in mind, it is not only not surprising but to be expected that our Lord in teaching about His kingdom and coming should have used not 'plain' but symbolical language, i.e. the only kind of language which has ever been found for expressing truth as it is in essence—truth which is in itself above and beyond all time and all happenings in time.

But to anyone who takes the language as though it were expressing events of time, it necessarily seems that our

Lord meant that all was to happen at once, i.e. at one time—in some particular year or month or day. In truth all was to happen at once, for the coming of Christ, say between Pentecost and the Fall of Jerusalem, was His whole coming to the entire human race, along with the whole effect which it produces, just as the creation of Adam was in truth that of the whole human race: though in the one case as in the other the truth is shown to men living in time as happening through a very long series of events. Take a somewhat similar instance of our Lord's teaching. When 'the seventy returned [from their mission] with joy saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us in thy name,' our Lord said to them, 'I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven.'[1] Then He saw the truth about His victory over evil, as it is—saw it all at once—saw therefore that Satan *had fallen* from heaven. But we do not say or think that our Lord was mistaken in this, because Satan is not by any means conquered yet by men. What He saw and proclaimed was the truth. His power is essentially completely victorious over all the power of Satan and the whole kingdom of evil—how much more quickly we should be victorious too if only we believed it!—though His victory is manifested in time only very gradually and amid a struggle in which in each generation victory seems to incline now to one side, now to the other.

There are other instances in the Gospels of how visions of the naked, eternal truth came to our Lord. The conversion of the one Samaritan woman showed Him the fields of the world 'white already unto harvest.'[2] He saw His work accomplished, though in the process of time it had scarcely begun. Again, when certain Greeks came to Him a few days before His death, He saw through that event the complete triumph of His kingdom, and said 'the hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified,'[3] as though the complete triumph was to take place at once. Or again, when Judas had gone out from the supper to carry out his fell design, 'Jesus saith, Now is the Son of

[1] S. Luke x. 17–19. [2] S. John iv. 29–37.
[3] *Ibid.* xii. 20–23.

man glorified, and God is glorified in Him . . .,[1] i.e. He saw the whole result of His death, which Judas was to help to bring about, as if it had all happened—the perfect triumph of love over selfishness, though that triumph has now after so many years been very partially manifested in time.

The conclusion we are arriving at seems further to be borne out by the fact that, though our Lord said His coming would be immediately, yet when He was asked about the *time of the end*, His answer was apparently a direct contradiction of this, 'the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. . . . all these things are the beginning of travail. . . . And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations; and then shall the end come. . . . But of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only.'[2] Again, His parables of the kingdom, collected in S. Matt. xiii., as well as the parables of grace in S. Luke xv., and those of the Talents and Pounds, teach that His kingdom would be established and won, as it actually has been, by processes which in point of time are gradual and slow; they teach that men's hearts have to be won in spite of great difficulties and one by one, just as has been the case. His teaching about Himself in His relation to His Church, e.g. in S. John vi.; x. 7–16; xv., all points in the same direction. In fact, it is not too much to say that the rest of our Lord's teaching about His coming in His kingdom, as well as the whole body of His moral teaching, suits perfectly the state of things which has actually been and is—a condition in which He wins His way in our souls only very slowly and in spite of long-continued opposition and much difficulty. It seems, therefore, almost impossible to suppose that His teaching in the few passages which have caused so much perplexity can really contradict all the rest. Whereas, if His teaching about His coming in these passages describes it in its essence, with its essential results, into which the

[1] S. John xiii. 31 f.
[2] S. Matt. xxiv. 3-14, 36. Cf. S. Luke xvii. 20 f.

question of time does not enter, then the fact that the rest of His teaching implies that the *time* during which He wins His kingdom will be long causes no contradiction at all. It must indeed be confessed that the reports of His teaching, especially in S. Matt. xxiv., &c., seem to show that the evangelists were themselves confused by it. But there is nothing surprising in this : for, as we have thought, such truths cannot be taught so that they can be understood easily. Like the rest they were truths *into* which the Holy Spirit is to lead the Church gradually, manifesting more and more of their meaning in each age in response to the Church's earnest desire and efforts to learn.

The conclusion we have come to then seems at least to be this : that it is far more likely than not that our Lord did not make the mistake which has been attributed to Him in His teaching about His own coming in His kingdom, but that that teaching applies to the Church in every age, and will become more and more illuminating to her as she grows in experience.

If this conclusion is right, then it behoves us to do our best to find out what this teaching means specially for the Church in our age, and for its members. For this is what Christ's disciples in every age need to see. They do not need to see the future ; but they do need to see the essential nature of Christ's present coming in His kingdom, in order that they may understand God's purpose in the events which happen in time, and may co-operate with it. Of what immeasurable value is it for us, e.g., to see that Christ's coming was once for all ; that His kingdom is essentially victorious over all other kingdoms ; that all other powers to which men trust fail and are of no account before His force ; that His coming causes judgment, because it is what it is, and that such judgment is for the salvation of all ; in short, that He Who ' must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet ' ; Who, in other words, because He is ' lifted up ' draws all men unto Himself—into the embrace of His love—has come ! To believe and understand this is to be possessed of a confidence which can remove mountains ; it is to partake of the faith the apostles had in the

first age, and the saints in all succeeding ages—the faith that S. Paul expressed in Rom. viii. 38, 39: 'I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' A church or an individual who has this faith realizes that the one thing needful for Christ's disciples is to make Him their constant companion; to trust and cling to Him at all times; to rely on His force alone; 'to welcome each rebuff that turns earth's smoothness rough,' and diverts their trust from earthly things that it may be fixed solely on Him. But alas! such faith is rare, and is often only re-evoked when disasters happen—by a fresh 'day of the Lord.' There was one lately, when the Church in France was persecuted and despoiled of her property. That seemed altogether a disaster—a deliberate and venomous attack by the State on Christ's religion, which must cause great loss to the Church. Yet its effect has been of the opposite kind. The great spiritual revival in the French Church was due chiefly to it. And now that it has been followed by this appalling war, the French nation as a whole has turned to find Christ beside and within her, and has manifested His power and self-sacrificing love so that the whole Christian world is marvelling at it. Our own Church is in great need of something to open her eyes that she may realize that Christ is here, within us, winning His kingdom. We have been trusting far too much to other things. When a short time ago an attack was made by the State on part of our Church, an attack which compared with that which the Church of France suffered was mild and just and without venom, the whole Church of England was stirred to its depth to resist it. It was as though the Church was threatened with the greatest possible disaster. All parties in the Church, which cannot unite for anything else, combined their forces to resist this. When Ministers of the Crown said they considered they were doing a service to the Church by the Welsh Disestablishment Bill, they were condemned as hypocrites. Yet if Churchmen had remembered Christ's

teaching and had tried to see how it was being illustrated by the resurrection of the French Church which was actually taking place, they might have seen that these Ministers were, whether sincerely or cynically, saying only what was true! Could any Church which relied only on Christ, Whose strength is always made perfect in man's times of weakness, consider that being deprived of State support and of her material property was an irreparable disaster? We shall, I believe, in future look back upon that struggle as one which afforded a most melancholy spectacle of a Church which had, for the time at any rate, lost its first faith.

Is not the same lack of faith shown by the feeling which still largely prevails in our Church that if she were to be deprived of her worldly dignity, e.g. if her Bishops ceased to live in palaces and have large incomes and rank with temporal Lords, her prestige and influence would be greatly lessened! Anyone who has worked among the poor in a big city knows that one of the greatest hindrances to the increase of Christ's kingdom among them is this same worldly dignity of the Church. Our Church still acts to a great extent as if she were a kingdom of this world, or a business concern like a bank, which has to see that its managers have good houses, &c., that the general public may see that it is a flourishing concern and have confidence in it.

Nevertheless, Christ is here within us, and is winning His kingdom. And, in spite of what we have said, there are many signs that the Church is gradually coming to realize His presence more, and to trust to Him only for light and power. We must help by realizing the meaning of His teaching ourselves and living in accordance with it.

It might seem that missionaries in a heathen land like India would realize very vividly that the one only needful thing is to keep in constant contact with our Lord. And it is true that He makes His presence felt out here in new and wonderful ways. Yet the temptation is constant to us all to trust chiefly to other things for spreading His kingdom. It is very common all over India to find missionaries so busy with other works that they have almost no time or energy left for prayer, or offering worldly bribes

of one kind or another to win the kingdom. Missions make their plans very often as though schools, hospitals, colleges, &c., were the main things to trust to instead of the daily, constant close fellowship with our Lord, which cannot be had unless we give all our best energies of mind and heart to prayer, and without which no other agencies are of any use whatever. In view then of all the temptations which come to Churches and to individuals to trust in other things rather than in Christ, it seems of the utmost necessity that we should ponder over our Lord's teaching as to His coming in His kingdom; see how it has been and is being fulfilled in the history of the Church since Pentecost, and then try hard to live in accordance with it, i.e. to aim at such constant, persevering, loving communion with our Lord as will enable us at last to say, 'I live, yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me.'

Christ's Final or Completed Coming.—The last part of our inquiry concerns the final 'coming' of Christ, by which His whole 'coming' to man will be completed. This, it is said, will take place 'at the last day' (S. John vi. 39; xii. 48), or 'at the end of the world,' or 'consummation of the age' (S. Matt. xiii. 39, 40, 49). This also is the final coming to judgment, which will complete the manifestation of our Lord as the judge of all mankind.

This completed 'coming' is variously described in the New Testament by the apostles in their comments on our Lord's teaching.

S. Paul speaks of it as 'the revelation' (ἀποκάλυψις) of our Lord Jesus Christ';[1] His 'coming,' or 'presence' (παρουσία)';[2] His 'day';[3] His 'appearing' (ἐπιφάνεια).[4]

S. Peter also calls it 'the revelation (ἀποκάλυψις) of Jesus Christ,' or the manifesting of the chief shepherd, and thinks that it means 'the end of all things' and 'is at hand.'[5]

[1] 1 Cor. i. 7; 2 Thess. i. 7.
[2] 1 Thess. ii. 19; iii. 13; iv. 15; v. 23; 2 Thess. ii. 1, 8.
[3] 1 Cor. i. 8; v. 5; Phil. i. 10; 1 Thess. v. 2; 2 Tim. i. 12.
[4] 1 Tim. vi. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 1, 8; Titus ii. 13.
[5] 1 S. Pet. i. 5, 7; v. 4; iv. 7.

The author of 2 Peter speaks of it as 'the day of the Lord,' and describes it in such a way as to show he took our Lord's teaching literally; but he adds an explanation of the fact that it had not come immediately, as was expected.[1]

S. James calls it 'the coming (παρουσία) of the Lord,' and thinks it is 'at hand.'[2]

S. John also speaks of it as His 'coming' (παρουσία), and thinks of it as bringing the full manifestation to man of the eternal life which is being manifested always.[3]

The Apocalypse speaks of Christ's coming and judgment as present.[4] Chapter xx. has often been misinterpreted to mean that Christ will come at some future time and will bind Satan for a thousand years, during which he will not be able to tempt men at all, while Christ and His saints reign on earth, and that afterwards Christ will let him loose again 'for a little time.' Taken with the rest of the book, the vision of this chapter seems to mean that Satan is already completely conquered by Christ, though the victory is only slowly manifested during the struggle of the Church on earth, that the judgment is perpetually going on, both of those who are on earth and those who have died, and that at last the manifestation of Christ's victory over evil will be complete and final; that those who have received and live by Christ's resurrection life are reigning with Him now—they are the 'blessed and holy' ones who 'have part in the first resurrection,' who possess a life which cannot be overcome by evil, and fight with Christ for the attainment of the complete resurrection of mankind and His final triumph.

The Epistle to the Hebrews also seems to speak of the judgment rather as present than merely future, though 'the day' and 'Christ . . . shall appear a second time . . . unto salvation' may refer only to what the other apostles thought of as the future day of judgment.[5] For the 'day' or 'coming' of Christ which they thought to be

[1] 2 S. Pet. iii. 3–13.
[2] S. James v. 7–9.
[3] 1 S. John ii. 28; iii. 1, 2; v. 12, 13.
[4] Rev. ii. 5; iii. 20; xx.
[5] See Heb. ix. 28; x. 24, 25, 30, 31; xii. 23.

imminent is usually spoken of as bringing an universal judgment of all mankind.[1] In fact, all through the New Testament Christ's coming and judgment of man are spoken of as necessarily connected. The reason of this is clear when we remember what judgment is. It is not punishment, but the separation of the good from the evil, the false from the true. It discovers and proclaims what the man is who is being judged, whether he is innocent or guilty. When this is done, the work of judgment is at an end.[2] The law then says whether the man is to be set free or punished. Christ is the judge of all men, because He is Man living perfectly the life for which man was created. And His coming to give Himself to men necessarily tests them: they either choose Him or reject Him—wish and try to live a life like His, or do not wish to. In the end, therefore, when He is finally and completely manifested, men will be completely separated into two bodies, those who have chosen Him and His life of love, and those who have refused Him and chosen a life of selfishness.

The language of the apostles makes it clear that there was a general expectation among them that Christ would shortly come again visibly from heaven, to bring about the end of the world and to hold an immense assize at which all men, the living (on earth) and the dead, would be assembled and judged, i.e. separated, the evil from the good, the latter going to their reward, the former to their punishment. They appear to have thought that all this would happen at one and the same *time*. Afterwards also, though the Church gradually came to see that the apostles were mistaken not only as to the time, but as to the nature of our Lord's coming, the expectation still held its ground that there would be such a 'coming' some day as the apostles supposed, which would mean a 'day of judgement' on which all men would be assembled and judged *at some one future time*. This has been ever since

[1] E.g. Rom. ii. 4–10; xiv. 10–12; 2 Cor. v. 10; 2 Tim. iv. 1, 8; Acts xvii. 31; 1 S. Pet. iv. 5.

[2] This is obscured by the fact that in English law a man is 'judged by his peers,' i.e. the jury are really judges, the judge being the expert who places his knowledge of the law at their disposal.

and is still the common belief. Again and again individuals or sects of Christians have expected 'the second coming' on a certain date, which they think they have discovered somewhere in the Bible, generally in the Book of Daniel. And the main body of Christians, while perhaps they smile at such strange methods of interpreting the Scriptures, think there will be such a coming some day, and that these people are wrong, only because they profess to have discovered the date of it. It seems probable, however, that in course of time this expectation will have died out in the Church generally, though it may still be held by an obscure sect here and there. It seems most probable also that as it dies out the realization of the meaning of Christ's teaching about His 'coming' will become much more clear and full, with the result that men will be greatly helped by it to live in closer union with Him 'all the days.' The expectation that the second coming of Christ to men and the judgment which this causes is to be at a future date diverts our minds from the truth—the wonderful, life-giving truth—that He has already come and is coming always; that the judgment therefore is always going on. It was and is caused by a literal interpretation of our Lord's teaching on the subject, i.e. by forgetting the symbolical nature of it of which we have been thinking, and into which the question of *clock-time* does not enter.

It is probable that if we were to express in words the common belief about an universal assize on a certain day in the world's history, and try to think what is involved in it, we should most of us discover that we do not really hold it: but that we have merely accepted a general idea and taken it for granted. It is quite certain that we should find in it a direct contradiction of very much of the teaching which has been handed down through the ages in most parts of the Church. For instance, the general teaching of the Church, which we subscribe to every time we keep the Festival of a Saint, has been that the saints see the Beatific Vision and are 'made perfect.'[1] They are like Christ, for they see Him as

[1] See Heb. xii. 22, 23.

He is. This can only mean that the full revelation or 'coming' of Christ has happened for them. For that 'great multitude which no man can number' the judgment is already past. Nothing greater can happen to them than has already happened. It is surely impossible to suppose that their nature is still in a maimed condition—that they are without their bodies! They are perfected saints, so we in common with the vast majority of Christians believe. We not only believe it because it has been the general teaching throughout most of the Church always, but also because such belief agrees with, and surely is demanded by, the whole Christian revelation of the nature of God. God is love, and therefore imparts Himself to all who can receive Him. As soon then as any man or woman is sufficiently holy and loving to receive the whole revelation of God in Christ, such revelation we may dare to say must be given, just as light must enter wherever there is an aperture for it.

Again, it has been taught and believed generally in the Church that at death we are judged once for all by the light we have had in this life and the way we have used it. This is generally called the 'particular judgment,' i.e. that of one person at a time. But the general judgment is only the sum of all the particular judgments, which are always going on.

There have been at times dreary theories and teachings among small sects of Christians that at death we go to sleep and do not wake up again till the last trump—probably a very long time hence! And we are nearly all taught even now to have such thoughts concerning our bodies, as though our nature was to be in a maimed condition—without power to express itself—from the time of death till the time of the judgment day, which may be thousands or even millions of years hence. All this is because we insist on thinking of the kingdom of heaven in terms of time. Dr. Westcott used to suggest that such difficulties would vanish if we could remember that clock-time would cease for us after death. Such a suggestion ought to help us to a clearer conception of Christ's teaching about His coming and judgment. Let us try to follow it out in certain directions.

There will no doubt come a literal day in the world's history when the race of man will have reached its limit in point of number. This, we have every reason to suppose, will be when this planet has at last become unfit for human habitation, either because it has collided with some other body and has been smashed to pieces, or approached so near to some other body that the expectation of the author of 2 Peter is literally fulfilled, 'the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up,' or because it has got to the waterless condition to which it is gradually approaching—a condition perhaps rather worse than that in which Mars at present is—in which man could not exist; or for some other reason which we cannot foresee. That is, we are right to look on the way of 'nature' as we know it as the way in which God will continue to work, until He shows us otherwise. Thus the race may go on growing in number for thousands or even millions of years more. But at last it will have reached its full growth. Then no doubt the final and complete judgment will have taken place, i.e. the whole race of man will have been judged by the likeness or unlikeness to Christ of all its members.

Again, all men, while they continue to live in a condition in which good and evil are mixed together, gradually make their choice between them. They go on making very many acts of choice until they arrive at a condition in which they have chosen completely. All experience as well as God's revelation leads us to see that at last all the members of the full-grown race of man will have made their choice. Millions have made it long ago, millions are in process of making it now, millions no doubt will make it in the future. At last the 'day' will come when all will have made it, and when time, as we know it now, is at an end. The judgment or separation will then be complete. It will appear concerning all the members of the human race that they have either chosen Christ or refused Him. And even now we can dimly realize that, when the judgment is complete, and we are no longer in a condition of time, the whole judgment, just as the whole 'coming' of Christ to man, will

appear as one only—the judgment of Man—the coming of Christ to Man—as if it had all happened at once. And we shall see that the descriptions of it as 'the day of the Lord,' 'the day of his appearing,' 'the day of judgement,' Christ's 'second coming to judge the quick and the dead' were all true descriptions, though not in the sense men supposed when they thought of 'the day' as only one earthly day of twenty-four hours. We can understand also that Christ saw it beforehand as it is, and spoke of it as it is, apart from, or rather as including, all the time-manifestations of it which go to make up the whole.

This enables us to take a much truer view of the relation of the Ascended Christ to us and to all men. It enables us to realize that Christ comes always to us all; that He comes always for salvation, but that we and all men are always necessarily being judged by His 'coming' (*παρουσία*), which is better translated 'presence.' And anything which enables us to realize the nearness of Christ to ourselves and to all men is of unspeakable value. Therefore it is to be greatly desired that all beliefs concerning the judgment which tend to obscure for us the meaning of Christ's teaching should die out in the Church.

Let us proceed to consider the coming of Christ and the consequent judgment in relation to all those who are still in process of making their choice. But we must remind ourselves first of all what the 'coming' or 'presence' of Christ is. It is the coming in His human nature of Him Who is the perfect manifestation of the infinite love of God. He comes, so to speak, from the heart of the eternal Father. He comes because the Father yearns for all whom He has created, and to whom He is everlastingly giving all the life they have, because He longs that they should be filled with His own life, and because He is willing to sacrifice Himself to the uttermost that this may be. We know how wonderfully strong and unchanging the love of the best and holiest human parents is: but how can we imagine the love of our heavenly Father for every one of His children? It is far beyond all that we can think. It is the source of all the

love we have ever seen in men, and beyond it all, it is infinite —perfect, unchanging, self-sacrificing love. Nothing that we creatures can do can change it. The farther we fall the more full of yearning our Father becomes. The higher we rise the more He clasps us to Him and rejoices in our oneness with Him. This is the love which the coming of Christ brings to every single man and woman in creation, wherever he is and whatever is his condition. It is most necessary that we should remember this and dwell on it habitually. For those who realize it are the exception not the rule, even among Christians. A large number of the prayers that go up to God are prayers of those who seek by them to persuade Him to be as loving as they are : to make the allowances for people they are ready to make ! An enormous mass of false theology, which has deceived millions of people, has been in the past and still is based on a similar supposition— that we cannot expect God to be as loving as very many men are ! It is extremely difficult for anyone to realize that God loves *him* with a personal love even as much as some people love him—husband or wife or father or mother or lover or friend. Yet the central truth, without which we cannot realize what the coming of Christ means, is ' God is Love,' which has as a corollary ' we love because he first loved us,' i.e. God loves without any limit at all, and all the love of all the men and women who have ever been or shall be on earth has come from Him, and is but a faint reflection of the infinite glory of ' the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

The people to whom Christ comes may be divided into four groups : (1) those who are consciously loving and serving Him, however many falls they may have ; (2) those who are loving and serving Him unconsciously ; (3) those who in this world have never known anything of Christ or His principles ; (4) those who have known and have deliberately to the end and in the end rejected Him. Let us think of instances of all these classes, and try to think what Christ's coming to them means.

(1) We may dare to think of ourselves, may we not, as

among those who consciously love and serve Christ. This is not because of our deserts, but because He has manifested Himself to us so often and so wonderfully that, in spite of all our self-love and sin, we cannot help loving Him. Each of us can understand best from his own experience what the coming of Christ means. We realize, as we look back, that He has been coming to us ever since we first began our conscious life ; that His unchanging and perfect love has been poured out upon us always. We have often forgotten Him, sinned against Him again and again, denied Him, it may be ; but always when we have turned back to Him we have found Him there with the same loving welcome as ever. He has indeed often made things hard for us—allowed temptations to thicken upon us—hidden Himself so that prayer has been very difficult, not only on account of our sins—has called upon us for service of others which has been often very hard and wearisome. But He has, we know, done all this because He wants to evoke from us all the strength of love, of self-sacrifice, of which we are capable ; because He wants us to love Him and those whom He loves not merely a little, but with all our heart and mind and soul and strength. And if we go on trying to serve and love Him, in spite of our many failures, what may we expect when we die ? What of His welcome—His coming—to us at and after death ? We need not say that we do not know, for though indeed we can only faintly imagine the glory of the manifestation of love which will be made to us then, we do know a great deal even now of what it will be, because of the love He has already manifested to us both in His own person and in very many others who possess His life.

But unfortunately we have most of us had notions of our Judge and His judgment instilled into us ever since we were children, which have tended to obscure the truth of Christ's love for us, and which no doubt affect us still much more than we suppose. They have come partly from people who tried to frighten us into being good when we were young, partly from interpretations of certain passages of Scripture which make them contradict the entire gospel of Christ. For instance, we read ' it is appointed unto men once to die,

and after this cometh judgement';[1] 'every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgement';[2] 'and I saw the dead . . . standing before the throne; and books were opened . . . and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works.'[3] These and similar passages have been taken to mean that directly after our death, or at the final day of judgment, or both (men's ideas are much confused about this), our Lord will proclaim before all men and angels all the things we have done in this life, and that usually means to us chiefly that He will bring to light before all men all the sins of thought, word, and deed of which we have been guilty, and which have remained for the most part in His remembrance only. And this has produced in very many people a terror of our Lord which causes them to shrink greatly from the thought of meeting Him after death. There is so much of this in so many minds that I may be forgiven if I try to combat it at some length and to vindicate the character of Him, union with Whom casts out all fear of this kind.[4]

Such interpretation of Scripture is based on the misconception which arises when the element of time is introduced into our Lord's teaching about the judgment; it is contrary to the whole gospel of Christ which the New Testament proclaims, as well as to all we know about the ways of love. Take the last first. Can we think of a loving person acting in such a way to one who has sinned and is repentant? It is impossible to imagine any of you Sisters acting thus to any of the women who were very sinful when they first came but are now trying hard to be good; impossible that you should gather the people in the compound together and proclaim to them the sins that the women did in the past, most of which were perhaps known to no one on earth but you. Yet this is precisely the kind of thing we have been led to expect that God will do! Take another instance. I have a father who has loved me with extraordinary devotion ever since I was born. When he died, I realized how

[1] Heb. ix. 27. [2] S. Matt. xii. 36.
[3] Rev. xx. 12. Cf. 2 Cor. v. 10. [4] 1 S. John iv. 18.

very bad a return I had made to him for all his love—saw this all at once, so to speak, now that the opportunity of serving him on earth was over. He must very often have been hurt by my neglect and selfishness. Yet I am quite certain that when I meet him in the next world, there will be no sign that he remembers any of my badness—no shadow to spoil the gladness of the welcome he will give me, and the great joy which is his because I have come. Every one of us expects the same glad welcome in the next world from people who love us, even though we suppose they know us through and through. Hence I say it is a shocking contradiction of all God has let us see of the ways of love to say that He will give us a reception which will cause us to shrink from and fear Him.

Such teaching is also directly contrary to the teaching of Christ. For instance, if we believed it, we should have to alter the parable of the Prodigal Son entirely. Instead of our Lord's picture of the father going eagerly to meet his penitent son, embracing him and treating him as if he had been a perfect son for whom no reception was too good, we should have to picture the father waiting for him sternly at home, seated in the hall and proclaiming to the whole assembled household the ways in which this young blackguard had dragged the family name in the mire, and tarnished the family honour! We should have to forget also how our Lord Himself received all penitent sinners, Mary Magdalene, the woman taken in adultery, the woman who was a sinner of the city, and the rest. In fact, we should have to suppose that God's character is almost the exact opposite of that which Christ has manifested. This is not contradicted by the fact that there is much said in the Bible about the wrath of God—'the wrath of the Lamb.' The wrath of God is as complete as His love, but it is against *sin* not *sinners*. God's whole being is set against all sin, but this is the precise reason why He, Who loves all men to the uttermost, welcomes all sinners who turn from sin with all His heart and treats them as though they were worthy of all that He can give them.[1] It is true that everything we have

[1] S. Luke xv.

ever thought or said or done is brought into judgment. All our acts of sin and also of penitence, of unkindness or selfishness and also of love, have had their own proper and necessary effect on our character. And our character is judged now and always by our Lord's. When He meets us at our death He will find us of a certain character, which, however weak and faulty, is that of one who loves Him and is penitent. The flaws that are in our character will make no difference whatever to the reception He will give us, but only to our power of realizing His love.

Hence, if we take the teaching of the New Testament as a whole, along with all the experience we have had of Christ's own love and that of other people, our conclusion as to the reception we shall meet with after death can only be such as this—we shall be dazzled and almost overwhelmed by a blaze of glory. It will seem as though all heaven were keeping high festival. And as we wonder at the cause of it, each one of us will realize 'it is because I have come'! We can think of a ship coming into port after a bad storm, and of its crew half-starved, tired-out, looking up and seeing the harbour crowded with people, their relations, lovers, and friends, waving a welcome to them, and, as they get close in, seeing them weeping with joy and their eyes glowing with love, because their loved ones have come back safely. That can only give us a very faint idea of the welcome which will meet us on the other side of death. Amid the dazzling glory we shall see our Lord (with more or less distinctness according as we have loved Him more or less on earth), manifesting such love as we have never imagined to be possible. In what kind of way we shall 'see' Him; how He will come to us; what will take the place then of the holy and wonderful sacrament by which especially His life has flowed into us on earth, these things we cannot tell now. But we can have no doubt at all that He will welcome each of us as if it made all the difference to Him and to the joy of heaven that he or she had come! He will show us that nothing is too good for us. And with Him will be, as we are led to expect, His Mother and His saints and angels, particularly no doubt those of them who have

been specially connected with us, and with whom we have made special friends. There will come also, we cannot doubt it, all those, our relations and friends, who have been nearest and dearest to us on earth—those whom our Lord knows we greatly long to meet. Each one will be ours in a separate way, and we shall be conscious of their separate loves as *their* love and yet as flowing from the glorious Saviour, Jesus our Lord, Who has loved us always, Who died for us, and is now pouring out upon us the whole love of His heart, just as if each one of us was the only possible recipient of it !

Can we at all imagine the effect which this welcome, this outpouring of love will have on us ? The friend I spoke of who found himself that night in a white-robed company singing Compline in Cuddesdon Chapel must be able to gain some idea of it from that experience. We have all probably had similar experiences, which enable us a little to understand that, when we find ourselves welcomed by Christ and His holy ones after death, we shall feel overwhelmed by it and almost heartbroken to think that this is the love of Jesus, which had been poured out on us all our lives while we went our own way and for the most part disregarded it : worse than that, while we deliberately sinned against Him Whose love it is. We cannot imagine that there will be any sign or hint of rebuke in the face of Jesus or of any of the rest, but His and their love, that perfect, loyal, trustful, welcoming love will burn into us and show us what we are as nothing else could. And while perhaps men are praising us on earth and saying how good we were, we shall *know* ourselves as unfit to be in the company of any good people, how much more unfit to share in the divine love that is being poured out on us ! (The Church on earth indeed does well to pray for the departed—to help them through the almost overwhelming sorrow which the manifestation of the love of Christ must produce in them.) But yet we know that great as the sorrow will be, it will be ' godly sorrow,' not such as causes us to shrink from Christ's embrace. Rather it will be a sorrow which makes us long to give ourselves wholly to Him, to

embrace every opportunity of serving Him and His people. It will make us love Him, the dear Lord who is embracing us, with all the love of which we are capable, and love all His people for His sake. We shall know what loving means as we have never known it before, because we shall see as never before what Jesus is, the perfect object and evoker of love.

And thus our devotion to our Lord, not fear of Him, will gradually purge away all the selfishness that is left in us, and make us more capable of receiving and returning love. Then as our capacity increases, our Lord, Who has always been longing to manifest Himself to us, will be able to do so more and more, until at last there will be no selfishness left in us and He will have manifested Himself fully to us—'we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.'[1] These two things *must* happen at last by necessity of nature. 'God is love,' and therefore He could no more keep us waiting for our full beatitude, when we become capable of 'seeing' Him as He is, than He could refuse now to come to our help when we cried to Him for succour. And we could no more help giving ourselves wholly to Him and to our fellow creatures for His sake, when 'we see him as he is,' than we could refuse now to help one lying helpless on the road, like the man who fell among thieves on the road to Jericho.

The coming of Christ and the consequent judgment will be complete for each of us as soon as the glorious day dawns when each has become capable of the Beatific Vision! We can think then of all the departed whom we know and love, and of all others who have 'departed this life in Christ's faith and fear,' i.e. consciously loving Him, however unfaithful they have been to Him at times, as living now in a wonderful union with Him. We can think of Him 'coming' to them constantly—manifesting His love in His own person and through all the holy company in which they are—step by step as they are able to bear it. We can be sure that we can help them by our prayers to rise quickly through all the clouds and hindrances of the

[1] 1 S. John iii. 2.

self-love that still remains in them, till it is all gone; and we can think of them rejoicingly as they 'with unveiled face beholding . . . the glory of the Lord are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Spirit which is the Lord.[1]

(2) We need not now dwell at any length on the 'coming' of Christ to those who are in this life loving and serving Him unconsciously, for all that has been said about Christ's love and longing for those who love Him consciously applies equally, or will apply, to them. He comes to both classes alike, and the result of His coming will be in both cases that they will at last be filled with His glorious life to their utmost capacity. God's love is one and the same desire for all: it is only the difference in capacity of people for receiving and living in union with Him that makes the differences in rank in the kingdom of heaven.

It is good, however, that we should remind ourselves how enormous a multitude of people is comprised under this second heading. It includes all those who revere Christ's character when they see it in others, even if they do not recognize it as His; who live on the whole by His principles, though they do not know they are doing so; very many also, no doubt, who say they have rejected the Christian faith, but have really only abandoned some counterfeit presentment of it which they have mistaken for it, and which they do well to reject. These are they of whom our Lord said that they will be very much astonished in the next world, when He tells them that they have loved and served Him in this one.[2] Included among them, we cannot doubt, are many thousands who have fallen in this war: men who did not know they belonged to Christ, and who perhaps scarcely ever or never thought of Him or prayed to Him; men whose lives up to the time of the war were not accounted Christian lives at all, who were perhaps thought of as among 'the last'—the least likely to get to heaven; but who, when something came which could evoke the best in them, showed that they were capable of heroic self-sacrifice even unto death—showed,

[1] 2 Cor. iii. 18. [2] S. Matt. xxv. 34–40.

that is, that they did belong to Christ in their innermost being, however much and often they may previously have ranged themselves with His enemies. We can think of them all now in their glad surprise at the welcome He gave them when they died, and is giving them still; as their characters are quickly changing and developing under the influence of His love; as their sorrow for the past deepens and develops into an ardent desire to atone for it by serving Him and His people now, and to live for themselves no longer. Perhaps the most tremendous surprise that the war has brought us has been the realization that there are millions of men all over the world who are in like case with them. And it should make us and all priests and teachers of the Church think with deep penitence that all these men ought not to have to wait for such an awful catastrophe as this war for something which shall evoke the heroism and self-sacrifice that is latent in them. Christ desires to come to them through His Church, His instrument for this purpose, and His love is that for which their hearts were made and which would, if they realized that He was there, evoke all that is best in them. Whose fault is it in all these cases, we ought to think, that they do not realize that He is there? Father Walker, our brother, told us before he died that when he was ministering to wounded soldiers in a big hospital in London, he did not come across any that were not Christian at heart. Every fresh batch, he said, seemed better—more gentle, patient, and responsive to love—than the last, though as he ministered to each batch in turn he thought it must be of very exceptional excellence. He could scarcely have told us better news or given us a more vivid realization of what Christ is now to millions of unpromising people who do not recognize Him, and of what He will be to them when they meet Him in the next world.

For this group also includes, let us remember, all those who would have loved and served Christ if they had known Him, but have died without giving any sign of heroism or capacity for receiving and returning His love. Even our small experience shows that there must be a vast

number of them in every generation. For we have seen samples of the worst kind of people, as they seem, changed entirely by seeing something of Christ's love in some one man or woman. After seven years of work in a bad slum in London it seemed to me that there was not a man or woman in the whole district who could not have been converted through any very loving woman, Sister or nurse or visitor, if there had been sufficiently long opportunity. And my experience, I suppose, is shared by most people who work in similar places. (It must be confessed that the experience of many of those who work among very rich people, especially those who are constantly trying to make more money, is much less reassuring.) But we have to remember that Christ normally comes to people in this world not directly, as by visions, but through men and women who have received His life—that is, through His Church. And His Church is very weak, and dissipates its strength terribly by its disputes and divisions. It only comes across a few out of the whole number so as to manifest the love of Christ to them. But sooner or later in the next world all these people will be face to face with the love of Christ Himself coming to them directly—love which is infinitely attractive, with which therefore the combined love of all the members of His Church put together cannot be compared. Hence, knowing what we do know on earth about the conversion of sinners, it seems almost impossible to imagine that anyone will be able finally to resist *Him*. It seems as though Christ must draw all men to Himself at last!

We must not, however, underestimate the amount of work which it will be necessary for the Church to do beyond the grave for the vast multitudes of which we are thinking. For though at heart they belong to Christ, and will be conscious that they do as soon as they know Him, yet when they die their whole outlook on life may be almost entirely selfish, and they will no doubt be in the company of thousands of others who are in like case. On the other hand we can be sure that death will be to them a great exposer of true values: it will show the worthlessness of much that they most delighted in on earth, and the price-

less value of much that they despised or ignored. We can learn this from the parable of Dives, as well as from our experience of the effect which even an illness which brings them near to death has on very many people, and from the effects of this war. They will therefore be inclined from the first to appreciate the beauty and love of Christ's servants who minister to them; they will realize more and more how bad their own selfishness is by contrast; their hearts will be purified by penitence, and they will thus be led on step by step till they are capable of beholding the King in His beauty! But the process may be very long and painful, and we must regard their silent appeal to the Church on earth for help.

(3) Those who have never known anything of Christ and His principles are chiefly the inhabitants of heathen countries who have not yet heard of Him. We can—must—believe concerning them that Christ will come to them, to manifest Himself, as soon as He can, i.e. as soon as He can find messengers to proclaim Him, and that if He does not find such in this world He will in the next. We can judge of the change this will make in them by what we have seen of the change—the wonderful transformation—which has been effected, for example, in the women who came to you as Hindus and without morals, and are now faithful, pure, and loving Christian women. There was a time when most of the Christian Church on earth supposed 'the heathen' were all going to hell! The fact that that statement horrifies nearly all of us now shows what a great advance the Church has made in the understanding of the love of God. I have come across two, but only two, missionaries out here who still think this, who both said 'if I did not believe all the heathen were going to hell, I should not have thought it worth while to come out here'! (which is much the same as though a doctor with healing remedies in his bag were to meet a number of badly wounded men, and were to say it is not worth while attending to their wounds, because they will probably heal in time by nature, or someone else may possibly come along and attend to them after a few days).

It is hard to understand what men can mean when they say all people are going to hell who have not had the chance of knowing Christ in this world. Do they mean that they would not have served Christ if they had had the chance? But how can anyone suppose he knows that? They surely cannot mean that Christ was not willing to give them the chance, even though they might not have taken it. We who know what wonderful transformations have taken place in the few whom we have been able to come across and influence, can be quite sure that Christ, Who is coming even now to them all, will be able to manifest Himself to them all some day.

(4) Lastly, we have to think of our Lord's relation to those who utterly reject Him, even when He has done all He can to manifest Himself to them. For though it is hard to imagine, from the experience we have had, how anyone can resist Christ's love always however gloriously it is manifested, and finally reject Him, we cannot say that there will not be such people, unless we are to rob a large number of passages of the New Testament of all meaning. We cannot escape from the plain statements there made that when Christ has done all He can to manifest Himself, there will be those who will utterly reject Him—those who have become such a corrupt mass of selfishness that they will find Jesus not desirable but hateful, and a life of love the exact opposite of the life they desire and have chosen. Included among these, our Lord tells us, will be many who in this world were accounted 'the first,' e.g. because they were by profession preachers or teachers of Christ's gospel, or because they gave away large sums of money in 'charity.' These will have to be banished utterly from God's face—from the Light: they will indeed banish themselves, and will depart into the outer darkness—into a life in which there is no goodness or love, nothing but selfishness and hatred. We have no power to imagine what such a life as that is, for we have never seen sinfulness unmixed with goodness. Here the good and evil both grow up together, and we have never seen anyone, however wicked, living in a society which was wholly bad—into which no rays of light and affection pene-

trated. But when we try to imagine such life in such a society, we realize that no language can be too appalling to describe it; that all the terms and expressions used to describe it in the New Testament cannot really do so, but are merely the worst that human language can do—'the outer darkness, where shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth': 'the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels': 'hell': 'the Gehenna of fire.'

What are we to think of our Lord's relation to those who have been or will be so banished to hell? Are we to suppose that He turns from them for ever; that His heart is shut to them; that He has ceased to want them; that His love so far as they are concerned has ceased? In the light of all that we have been taught and have experienced about God's love manifested in Christ, it seems entirely impossible to suppose any such thing. '*God is Love*': that is the revelation that has come to us, and it must mean, as we know by manifold experience, that He loves people not merely because of what they are, but because of what He is; not merely because their beauty or goodness evokes His love, but because it is His nature to long that His divine life may be given to and received by all rational creatures whom He made, and whom He constantly keeps in life, that they may receive Him. Let us try to imagine a person who rejects Christ and goes to hell. Let us suppose He has been ruined by covetousness, since that is the sin which does ruin men's characters and make them into something like devils far more quickly than any other sin. He has been trying to make money all his life—has made money his god—and gradually all the good that was in his character has died out. He is ready to betray his best friend or his country, or to sell his own soul—ready to put cheap and bad materials even into munitions of war, for example, if that is his work, and thereby to endanger the lives of hundreds of brave men who are fighting for his and their country—in order to make more money. Christ has come to him all his life through people, his relations or friends—has sent loving people to him, as Florence was sent to Mr. Dombey. But nothing has availed. His selfishness has become worse,

until he has no sense of love or honour left. And then he dies and Christ tries again in all the new ways that are possible in the other world to come to him and touch his heart, and convict him of sin. But he brazens it out, says it is God's fault for putting him in such circumstances, and causing him to be born with such desires, and at last hates God with all the force of his being and chooses a life the exact opposite of God's: in other words goes to hell. Now, all through his downward career he has been becoming a greater object of compassion to all Christlike people—how much more to Christ Himself! Anyone who loves him, say his wife, yearns for him more and more as he gradually descends towards the abyss. If she is a Christlike woman, she does not consider his bad treatment of her, but only his pitiable condition. Would even she turn her heart from him and cease to pity and long for him, if she knew he had sunk into the lowest condition of all—into a state in which there was no love and affection whatever, nothing but envy and hatred? And if she could not, then how do we dare even to suggest that God—our Lord Jesus Christ—the Perfect Lover, could shut His heart to and cease to care for him or any others who have gone to hell!

But if God *must* go on offering Himself to them, and with more yearning than ever because they have sunk into the outer darkness, what can we suppose that the banishment to hell means? There seems to be only one possible supposition—that it is the final and complete excommunication which is for the same purpose as all the excommunications of the Church—to make the men see the essence and result of evil, that they may at last turn from it back to God; that it is portrayed in our Lord's parable of the father giving his son his portion of goods and letting him go—to the devil; and that the result which our Father expect and longs for is that which the parable depicts. It seems that the only alternative is the dreadful supposition that God sends men to hell to take vengeance on them—punishes them for ever with a punishment which can have no remedial value, and which could satisfy, not God's justice, for that is only one aspect of His love, but only a desire for

retaliation for the wrongs done by the men to God! For, even though the punishment that God gives, which is always meant to be remedial, only becomes that of vengeance because of the bad reception of it by the sinner, as Dr. Moberly suggests,[1] the fact still remains that it *is* the punishment of vengeance, and that since God continues to keep the sinner in life it must be considered as inflicted by Him. Can we not be sure that God will thank us hereafter if we have believed and proclaimed that such a supposition is wholly impossible and hateful?

It does not perhaps fall within the scope of these lectures to discuss at length the possible results of their banishment on the people in hell. What we are concerned with is the truth that God's love in Christ cannot fail them; that Christ is the eternal High Priest of all men, Who must offer Himself for and to them till they are all saved and perfected; and that the farther men are from God the more He must go after them to bring them back; that His heart cannot be satisfied till they are all brought back.

But it will not, I hope, be out of place to make the following suggestions as aids to thought. (1) Can anyone be said to have finally and for ever chosen a life of sin till he has realized the whole effect of it? We do not know what unmixed sinfulness is here on earth: no one can know it till he is in hell. And many a man in our experience has made trial of a life of sin, and has afterwards turned from it when he has realized the awful emptiness it causes. We must of course beware of making any of our Lord's parables mean more than they were intended to teach, but we cannot but see that the punishment of Dives in 'hell' is depicted as remedial. If he had lost God, i.e. was entirely without love, he would have desired, as the devil did, that his brethren should come into the same place of torment instead of being extremely anxious that they should escape it. The teaching of the New Testament obliges us to say that at the end of their trial time—the time when the good and evil were mixed together—some will reject Christ utterly. But we can believe that this is not

[1] *Atonement and Personality*, chap. i.

necessarily the same as saying that they cannot and will not turn back to Him after they have made full trial of evil.

(2) Has anyone ever chosen evil simply because it is evil? Man by nature, as S. Thomas Aquinas says, seeks and must seek the satisfaction of his nature, i.e. what is or seems to be *good* for him. Now man was made for God and therefore can find the satisfaction of his nature in nothing less. It is possible that he may find a great deal of satisfaction in sin for a time—there may be a vast amount of excitement in the life of the devil and his angels: but is it not evident that man will at last arrive at such a condition that evil can satisfy him no more? Then his nature will still urge him to seek satisfaction of some kind, and we may at least hope that the parable of the Prodigal Son is meant to help us here also. In it the wicked son came at last to a state of utter emptiness, and, for no better reason at first than that he must have food, he turned back again to his father. We can at any rate be quite certain that our heavenly Father would be ready to receive anyone who turned to Him for any reason whatever: anything would be enough for Him to begin with—He would wait for the gratitude and love to come later on.

(3) It is quite possible to suppose that God sends people to hell, because that is His final means of winning them, when all else has been tried and has failed; or even that He will thus win them all in the end, without doing violence to or explaining away the teaching of the New Testament. This has, I hope, been sufficiently shown already. The fact, indeed, is that whereas such suppositions make the teaching of the New Testament a consistent whole, the opposite ones do not, but leave us faced by a large body of teaching which speaks of Christ's perfect and final victory over all evil, which teaching we have somehow to explain away.

(See Appendix for further discussion of the subject.)

We can leave the subject of Christ's 'coming' now, having our minds and hearts filled with the certainty that He Who is coming to us now at all times, Who pleads with us to let Him in—to live with Him constantly—is He

Whose love can never fail us or anyone ; He Who is giving Himself to all those whom we love, all for whom we pray, all men everywhere ; He for whom our hearts were made ; He Who because He is what He is, perfect God and perfect Man, must go on pouring out His love on all men till all are filled with it. And therefore we can also satisfy our minds and hearts with the *hope* at least that God's purpose, as S. Paul describes it, ' to sum up all things in Christ ' or ' through him to reconcile all things to himself ' will be at last fulfilled.

By the light of all this, and of the truth of our Lord's eternal Priesthood, the prayer ' Thy kingdom come ' becomes more and more full of meaning. It has often been thought of as a prayer only or chiefly for that sudden coming of the Lord ' at the last day,' when the elect shall be gathered in and *the rest cast out of the kingdom for ever.* If that was what it meant, we should find that most of the other prayers we said in accordance with God's will were tantamount to prayers that such coming of the kingdom might be delayed as long as possible. But now it is seen to be an intercession of universal scope, that Christ may come ever more and more to reign in the hearts of ourselves, our relations, our Brethren and Sisters, our friends, our countrymen, the people of other countries, our enemies, the heathen, the sick, the sorrowful, the rich, the poor, the people in this world and in the next, so that the whole kingdom may come ; that the partial coming which men used to expect, and which meant the abandonment of many to everlasting doom, may never be at all ; but that when our King at last ' shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father,' He, the God and Father of all, of Whom and through Whom and unto Whom are all things, ' may be all in all.'

' Unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be the glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever. Amen.'

APPENDIX

Christ's High Priesthood considered in Relation to the Teaching of the New Testament about 'the Lost'

We ought to consider whether this glorious truth of the eternal high priesthood of Christ, which implies that He must always offer Himself to and for each man, whatever that man's condition is, is consistent with the rest of the teaching of the New Testament.

It obviously is consistent with its teaching as a whole, since the object of the New Testament is to teach the gospel of God; that He is love; that His love is manifested in Christ, Who came and comes to save sinners—to seek and save that which is lost. This is the teaching of every book and almost every passage of every book. But there is a set of passages which, if they stood alone, would seem to contradict this, and to state or imply that men may arrive at such a state of sinfulness that God will reject and turn His face from them for ever, or that in their behalf Christ's high-priestly work will cease.

The following passages contain, I think, all the teaching of the New Testament which seems to imply this: S. Matt. vii. 13–23; x. 28; xiii. 41, 42, 49, 50; xxiii. 33; xxv. 30, 41–46; S. Mark iii. 28, 29; ix. 43–48; S. Luke xiii. 27, 28; xvi. 19–26; S. John v. 28, 29; 2 Thess. i. 7–10; Heb. vi. 4–8; Jude 6, 7. To these should be added our Lord's words about Judas, S. Mark xiv. 21; S. John xvii. 12. It is impossible to suppose that these few passages really contradict and make void the teaching of the whole of the rest of the New Testament. Rather than suppose that, we should have to suppose that the disciples in these places had reported and interpreted our Lord's teaching wrongly, if we could find no way of reconciling them with the rest. But there is no need either to resort to such a supposition, or to explain away the force of the passages, both of which expedients are highly dangerous, and are far more likely to hide than to proclaim the truth. It is best to consider mainly the

chief of the above passages, which contain reports of our Lord's teaching, from which the apostles' teaching has sprung: S. Matt. xxv. 41–46 and S. Mark iii. 28, 29. 'Depart from me, ye cursed,' or 'under a curse' (R.V. margin), 'into the eternal fire . . . and these shall go away into eternal punishment. . . .' 'Whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin.'

The main difficulty in the whole subject has been caused by the wrong use of the word *αἰώνιος*. It is often said, 'we must not attach one meaning to it in one passage or in one part of a sentence, and another in another.' But this is just what has caused most of the misunderstanding. The main use of the word is to describe the life of God. Its use, therefore, when it is applied to God should determine all its other uses. It is used to describe the life which is of itself, which was manifested to us in Christ, and in which God invites us to share (1 S. John i. 1–3). For us, Christ says, 'life eternal is to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ . . .' (S. John xvii. 1–3). No idea of time is introduced by the word at all, but rather the opposite idea. Therefore, to translate it in certain places 'everlasting,' which introduces the idea of time, was a very bad and misleading mistake in the A.V., which has been rectified everywhere in the R.V.

If, then, eternal life means the life of God, which for us means knowing God, eternal death or punishment means loss of this life, or a condition of not knowing God. This loss can also be and is described as 'hell.' (The word 'damnation,' which used to be such a favourite with preachers of the severe type, is entirely eliminated in the R.V., and the Greek words *κρίμα* or *κρίσις* are rightly translated 'judgment' or 'condemnation.') Such punishment, or loss, or death can be and often is experienced in this life as well as in the future one. All bad, wilful sin brings with it something of this death, or hell, or loss of God. And each day of judgment as we know makes a clearer separation between those who are living with God and those who are living without Him; those who are sharers more or less in eternal life, or who are experiencing more or less eternal death; e.g. this war is a very tremendous day of judgement or separation of the two classes of men. But the New Testament teaches, what we might have expected even without it, that there will come at last a final day of judgment, which will make a complete separation between those who have altogether chosen

God, and therefore are filled with His life, or 'inherit the kingdom' and are 'the blessed of the Father,' and those who have altogether rejected God and are therefore 'under a curse,' dead in sins, and who must because they have chosen this depart into the eternal fire—not necessarily the fire which lasts for ever (nothing is said about that), but the fire which is the torment of having lost God, or being in a condition of evil unmixed with good. But just as the nature of the last judgment can be gauged to some extent from days of judgment in human history on earth, so also can the purpose of it. Here the separation is made, as by this war, we all believe, in order that wicked men may see how evil sin is and may turn from it to God. This judgment is having this effect in thousands of cases now, and will probably have it at last in millions. We are getting through this war an appalling vision, such as was vouchsafed to Dante, of hell—a state of being without God, not ruled by His Spirit, but by the opposite spirit of Anti-Christ. This kind of judgment and banishment of the wicked into a condition of evil is entirely consistent with the whole revelation of God's love in the New Testament. God, having tried all other appeals, at last gives men over to sin, that they may see its awfulness and effect and therefore turn from it. The punishment of hell is always remedial in its purpose, so far as our experience goes. Why, then, should we not be ready to believe that the final banishment to hell of S. Matt. xxv. &c. is in the same way remedial, and so find in the New Testament one consistent whole? Then the last judgment is seen as the last of all those which have preceded it, and not as something wholly different in kind.

If, then, we take our Lord's teaching as to the judgment of the wicked along with the whole of the New Testament, it appears to mean that He is obliged at last to let them depart from His face—to hell—because this is what they have chosen. But He gives them thus up to a reprobate mind (Rom. i. 28), that they may realize at last, as the prodigal son did, how empty and appalling life is without God; and meanwhile His whole heart goes on yearning for them, the Father giving Himself wholly for them, i.e. sending His Son to seek and save them; and the Son, man's eternal high priest, giving Himself wholly to and for them, that He may fulfil His Father's will and at last bring back to Him that which was *lost*; find a way of bringing to life again those who were *dead* in sin.

Again, our Lord's teaching about the sin against the Holy Ghost [1] means that if and so long as man rejects God—calls good evil and evil good—he cannot be forgiven either in this world or any other: he cannot have God, but must be without Him while he rejects Him; the punishment for this *cannot* be remitted so long as the sin remains. But our Lord does not say that a man who blasphemes against the Holy Ghost can never cease to do so. Here again, to be 'guilty of an eternal sin' does not mean to sin everlastingly, but to be guilty of a sin which is nothing less awful than the refusal of eternal life, or God. It is the sin of one who says in effect that God is not good, and he does not want Him! The passage implies that the men who said, 'By Beelzebub the prince of the devils casteth he out devils' were guilty of this sin. The scribes—perhaps the same—who stood and jeered at the Cross, were guilty of it too. There has never been on earth worse blasphemy against the Holy Ghost than when Christ was rejected, called evil and crucified. Yet we all believe that Christ died for all those men and was offering Himself for them, that His heart never ceased to thirst for them; and the history in the Acts leads us to believe that many of those who had been guilty of this sin repented and became Christ's disciples afterwards.

So with the difficult passage of the Epistle to the Hebrews,[2] even if the writer was partly mistaken himself, the meaning which God teaches us to attach to it, by the teaching and history of the New Testament, is that if Christ and His salvation is rejected there is no other: to refuse Him is to refuse all, and so long as men refuse Him they must be without God, i.e. in a hell of some sort. To say that it means that no one who has rejected Christ can ever again come back to Him is to make it inconsistent with the whole New Testament and the experience of all the Christian ages.

It is to be remembered that in former ages men liked to think there was everlasting punishment, and that God took vengeance on sinners. They felt like that themselves and were glad to think that God did also. Hence their dreadful teaching about His justice, &c. Now we are getting to understand love better, and mankind as a whole is far more loving than it ever was before. Hence we are in a better condition for understanding the New Testament teaching about God's love, and for believing that Christ must always be man's high priest,

[1] S. Mark iii. 28, 29. [2] Heb. vi. 4–8.

that He can never turn His face from anyone, and can never want vengeance; e.g. in this war we see our whole nation, as well as individuals, struggling bravely to rise above the desire for vengeance and retaliation, which is that of the natural man, and we all know that so far as we succeed we are following Christ's teaching and example.

This is not at all to say that God does not hate sin, or that it is not so hateful as we formerly supposed. God must hate and be opposed to sin altogether, because He is perfect love, and sin is its opposite: the Passion of Christ shows its awfulness. But what the New Testament tries to make us realize is that, because God hates *sin* with the whole force of His being, He is never to any *sinner* in any other relation than that of a perfectly loving Father, Who gives Himself to the uttermost to save the sinner from his sin. For the New Testament teaching is meant to impress on us that Christ came and comes to save sinners from their sin, and not merely from punishment. (The idea that God's justice required an equivalent in punishment led men to forget this.) Hence the New Testament uses the strongest language that can be found to describe the awfulness of sin. And Christ is put before us as the Saviour, Who is willing to sacrifice Himself to the uttermost to save us from sin, and Who ever liveth to make intercession for the same reason. Because sin is so awful, He cannot bear to see any sin in us, and must therefore always do all He can to deliver us from its whole power, i.e. to persuade us to turn from it and use His power to give it up.

In these days people in general would very gladly accept the doctrine of Christ's eternal priesthood and the hope that at last His victory will be quite complete, if they did not think that there are certain difficulties in the way of doing so, which are too great to be overcome. The days are almost entirely passed, thank God, in which men could rejoice in the worst teaching about hell, could think that God and His saints would rejoice at witnessing the tortures of the damned, or that taking vengeance on enemies was good and desirable.

The chief of these difficulties are (1) the teaching of Scripture; (2) the general belief of the Church; (3) the philosophical demand that God's justice should be satisfied; (4) the danger of eliminating from sinners' minds the fear of hell.

1. With regard to the teaching of Scripture enough has, I hope, been said in the text to show that the difficulty is far greater

for those who believe that Christ's victory will not be complete than for those who believe it will be. Perhaps it is sufficient to add to what was said on the subject the conclusion of Bishop Westcott, one of the greatest Biblical students of this or any other age. He says 'if we are called upon to decide which of these two thoughts of Scripture must be held to prevail, we can hardly doubt that that which is the most comprehensive, that which reaches farthest, contains the ruling idea; and that is the idea of a final divine unity.'[1] Probably the key to the main difficulty is found when we realize that the 'wrath of God' of which the New Testament speaks is His wrath against *sin*, not against *sinners*; and in consequence of this all Christ's teaching about hell is intended to appeal to men's consciences by showing them the awfulness of *sin*, and not to their selfish fears by showing them the awfulness of *punishment*.

2. It is true that the general belief of the Church in past ages was that there would be *everlasting* punishment for some, if not for the majority of men. But there has been no œcumenical decree of the Church which obliges her members to hold this opinion. (In the clause of the Athanasian Creed 'and they that have done evil into everlasting fire,' the word 'everlasting' ought to be 'eternal' as in the R.V. of the New Testament, which does not introduce any idea of time at all.)

We must bear in mind also that along with this belief there have also persisted very faulty and most misleading beliefs about the character of God. The false theories of the Atonement which have been held for ages in most parts of the Church in more or less grotesque forms till our own day, are sufficient to show this. We do not feel bound to subscribe to them because they have been held so generally for so many ages: rather we rejoice that they are being given up. In the same way, without being unfaithful to the Church, we can be thankful that the old ideas about hell are being given up, as the Church grows in apprehension of the character and love of God.

3. It is of course true that God's justice must be satisfied, for His justice is the just God Himself. But it is a heathen, not a Christian, notion that His justice demands that a certain amount of sin should be counterbalanced by an equivalent amount of pain, i.e. that one evil should be counterbalanced by another! God's justice is but an aspect of His love. Seen in its relation to sin, it is the eternal and absolute contrary of it; seen in its

[1] *Historic Faith*, lect. ix.

relation to sinners, therefore, it can only be His desire that they should be wholly free from sin—that they should obtain as much good, or life, as they are still capable of receiving : it can never be the desire that they should be punished except so far as punishment is a necessary means for delivering them from their sins. God is ready and willing to forgive man's whole debt, if man is capable of receiving such forgiveness. This is an essential part of the gospel of Christ and is plainly taught all through the New Testament. Hence God's justice can only be satisfied when all sin is done away, and sinners can only satisfy it, i.e. Him, by giving up their sin, not by enduring punishment.

4. It is thought that Christ appealed to men's fears in His teaching about hell, and that we ought to do the same—must not indeed dare to do otherwise because the old teaching about hell is not approved of in these days. A R.C. priest said to me once when we were discussing this matter, ' Well, all I can say is that if my Tommies (he was a Chaplain to Irish troops) did not believe in hell fire, it would be no use to preach to them at all.' This is a very common opinion. The Tommies, we may observe, were such as we have been marvelling at in this war : men who in countless cases, though they were not deterred by fear of hell from much wrong indulgence of their passions, yet when their hearts were appealed to by the Cause of their country, or by the sight of wounded comrades, behaved like Christian heroes, even to the giving up of their lives to save others.

If our interpretation of Christ's teaching is the true one, then, as we said, He does not appeal to men's fears, but to their consciences, i.e. He tries to make men understand the awfulness of sin—to fear evil as evil, and not merely the punishment it may bring. That this is likely to be the true interpretation is seen in the fact that to appeal to men's fears of punishment is to appeal to that in them which is the root of all their sin—their self-love. If we induce a man to give up his sins merely through fear of punishment, we have helped to make him a worse, not a better man. He does not hate his sin, but would do it again if it were not for the fear of punishment. Therefore, as our Lord teaches, he does in truth go on doing it,[1] and in addition we have induced him to become a coward. Dr. Pusey wrote, ' the fear of hell peoples heaven.' If that means, as it no doubt did in his heart, ' fear of losing God '—' fear of the evil of sin,' then it is certainly true : but if it had only meant cowardly fear of burning in hell,

[1] E.g. S. Matt. v. 28.

then it would be much more true to say that it peoples hell. No appeal can cause a sinner to become a better man which does not appeal to his conscience, i.e. that within him which says, 'I ought' or 'I ought not.' Christ indeed said much to show men the vanity of earthly things in comparison with heavenly riches: but that is a way of educating men's consciences that they may see more clearly what they *ought* to desire and what to avoid. But an appeal to men's cowardice does not educate the conscience. Rather it induces men, as the whole religious history of man shows, to search for expedients for avoiding the punishments and for going on comfortably in their sins. (See above, pp. 300–303.)

What is our own experience? Of all the sinners we have known who have turned from their sins and become good, we should, I suppose, say that not 5 per cent. had done so from fear of endless punishment. On the other hand, we have known or heard of thousands of men in all ages who have become sneaks and cowards through that fear; and probably many more still whose hearts have been turned from God by the teaching about hell which our forefathers revelled in.

Indeed the holy religion of Christ, whose purpose is to enable men to give up sin and become holy and loving like Christ, has on account of men's cowardly fear of hell been emasculated and debauched appallingly by all the disgraceful expedients which have been introduced into it for saving people, not from sin, but from its dreaded punishment in the next world. All this constitutes in itself very strong evidence that Christ in His teaching appealed to men's consciences always, not to their self-love; tried to induce them to fear sin and sinfulness and the loss of God, not the Devil and the tortures he might invent for them; and that He wishes all those who are sent to preach in His Name, to do as He did.

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